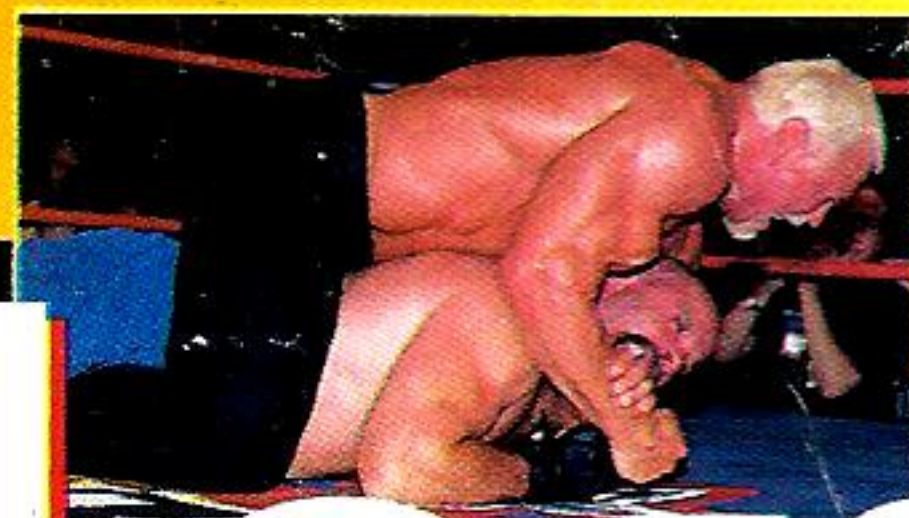


COMING SOON: A TANK-STEINER ALLIANCE!

THE WRESTLER

Wrestler[®]



IS CHYNA
ROBBING EDDIE
OF HIS LATINO
HEAT?

Scotty Is Too Hotty!

How RVD's Injury Changed ECW!

Q & A: David Flair

October 2000

\$2.50 U.S. \$3.79 CANADA £1.95 U.K.



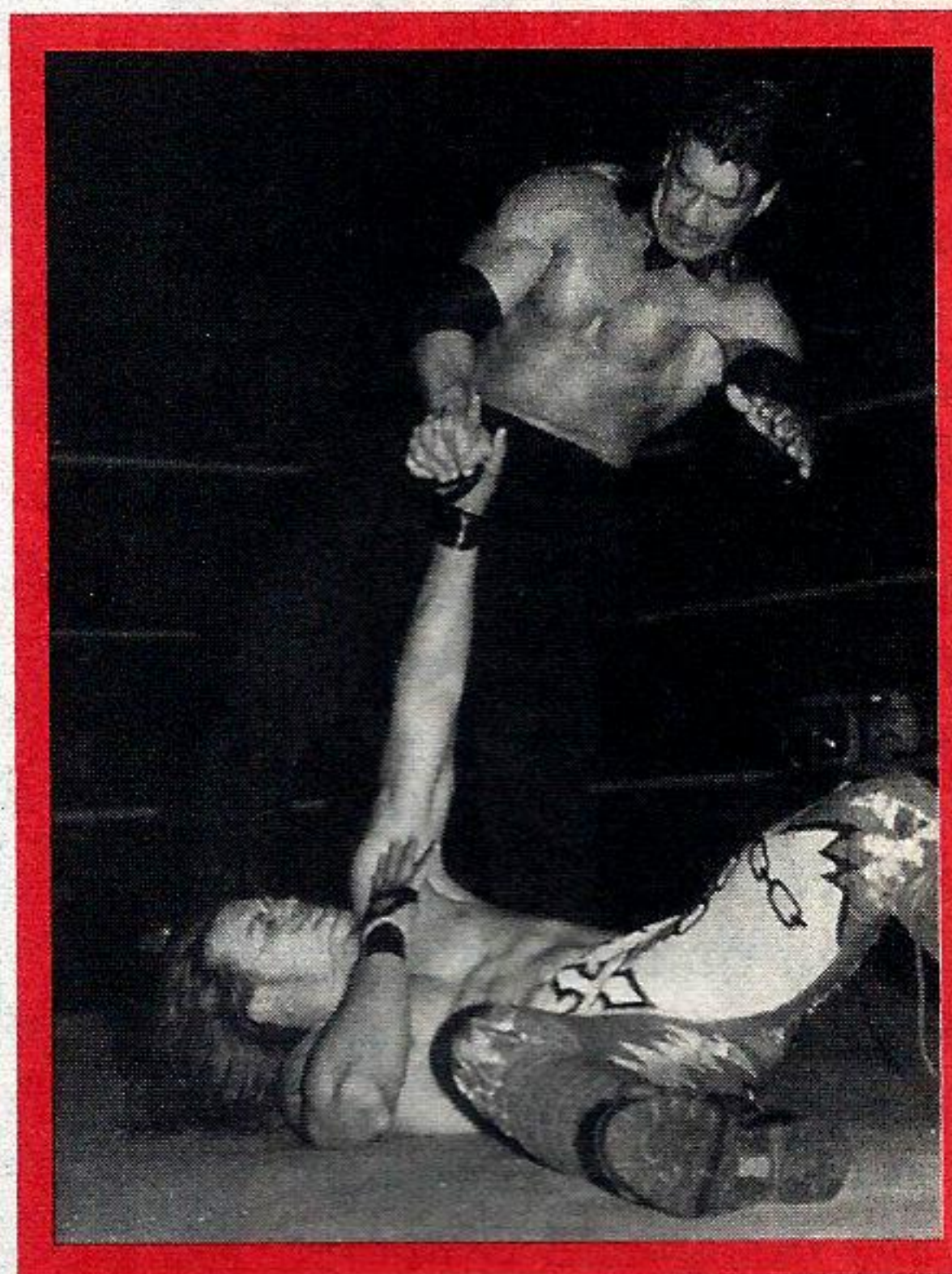
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DEPARTMENTS

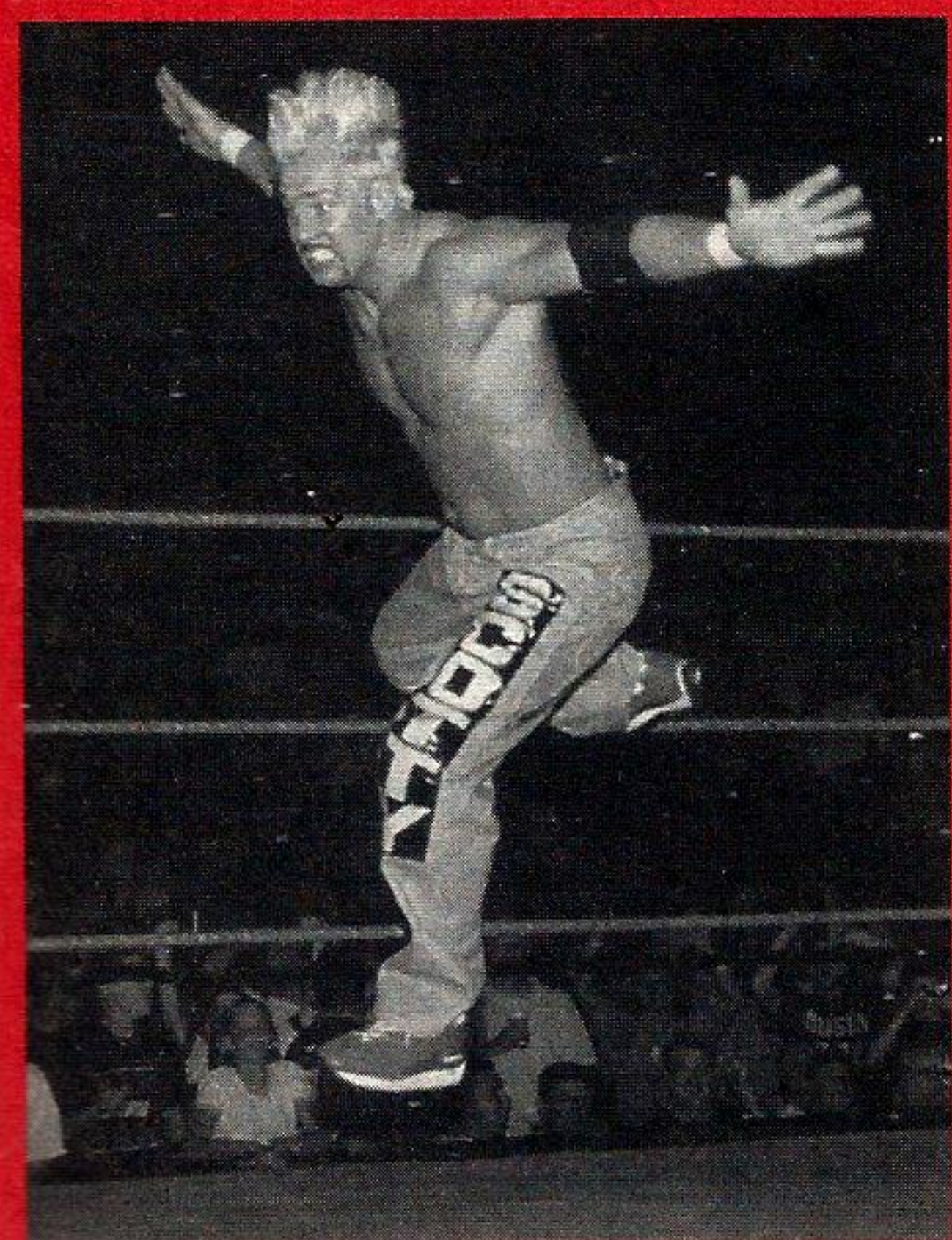
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Next issue on sale August 22, 2000

Y O U R Letters

IN-CREDIBLE REACTION

In my opinion, the Match and Manager of the Year for 2000 have already been decided. The match: Justin Credible vs. Tommy Dreamer at "Cyberslam 2000" (April 22). The manager: Jason.

What an awesome gamble the two took when Justin challenged Tommy Dreamer and threw away his ECW World tag team belt. That was an all-or-nothing gamble. It's not very often we see such courage and daring.

Add to that the way Justin dominated Dreamer (it's been a while since we've seen such overwhelmingly superior wrestling in a match). Also add the brilliant mind of Jason, who is not only the sexiest man in the world, but also the smartest manager in wrestling.

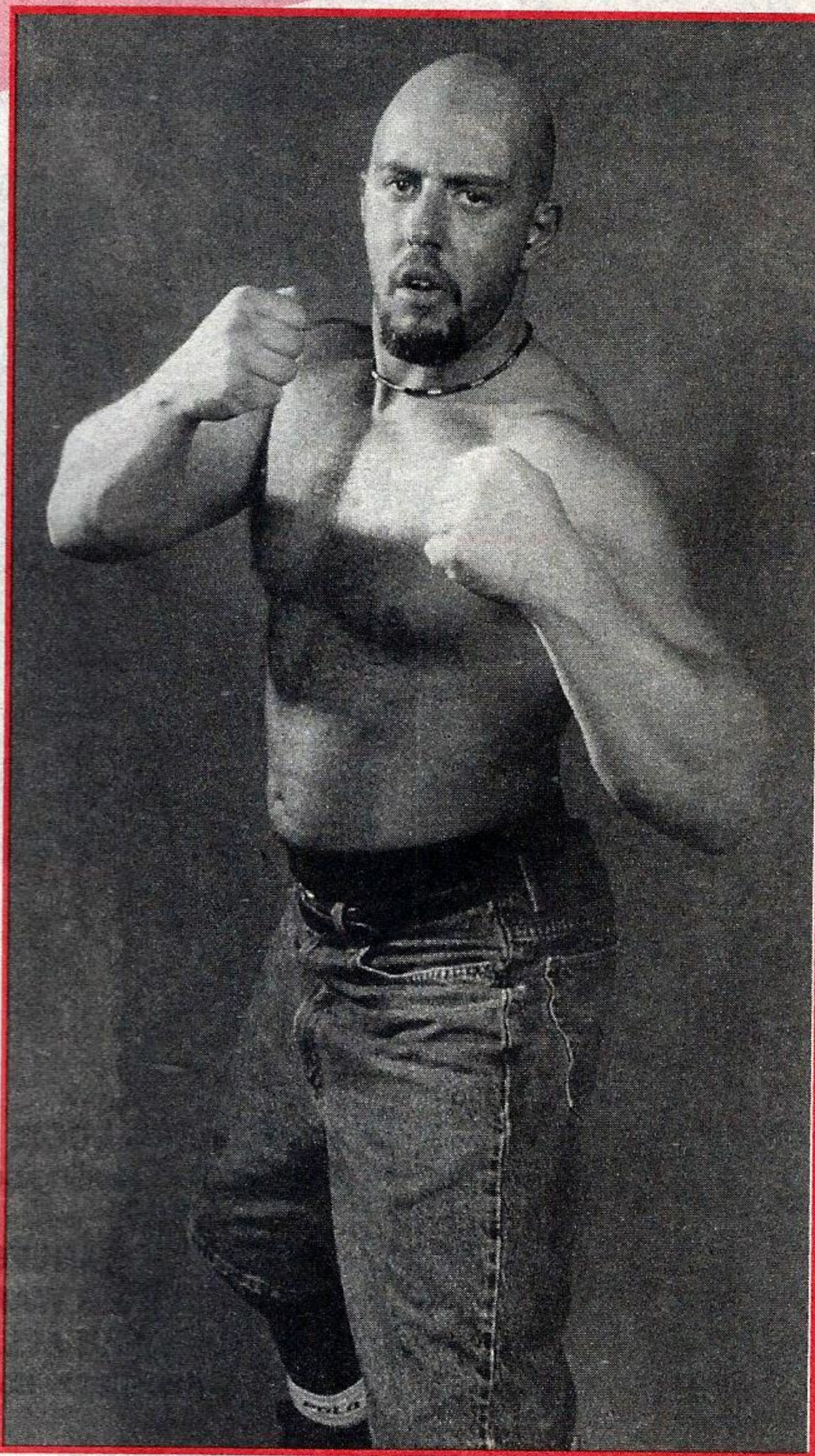
Jason and Justin have a lot to strut about.

DONNA MAE REDNICK
Sioux City, SD

[Editor's note: Also add interference from the equally sexy Francine. Without it, Justin probably wouldn't have won the match.]

Anyone who feels that Justin Credible will not make a totally great ECW World champion doesn't know what he's talking about. Justin embodies everything a wrestler should be in today's era of wrestling.

He has a great look and the



Readers' opinions on just what kind of World champion Justin Credible will make in ECW are varied, but so far, no one has been able to dethrone him.

right attitude to become a major star. Justin also has equal amounts of hardcore spirit and scientific ability. He can wrestle and fight, and he finally has a hot chick, Francine, in his corner. More importantly, he has youth on his side.

Personally, I would like to see

Justin hold the belt for a while. I think he is the future of ECW.

MARK WRIGHT
Washington Township,
NJ

Justin Credible makes me sick. What did that egg-headed creep do to deserve a shot at the ECW World title? I could think of five other ECW wrestlers who should have had that match instead of him. I refuse to watch ECW until he is stripped of the title.

VERNON STUBBS
Philadelphia, PA

[Editor's note: Justin received a shot at the title because Dreamer accepted his challenge.]

R & B, PRO & CON

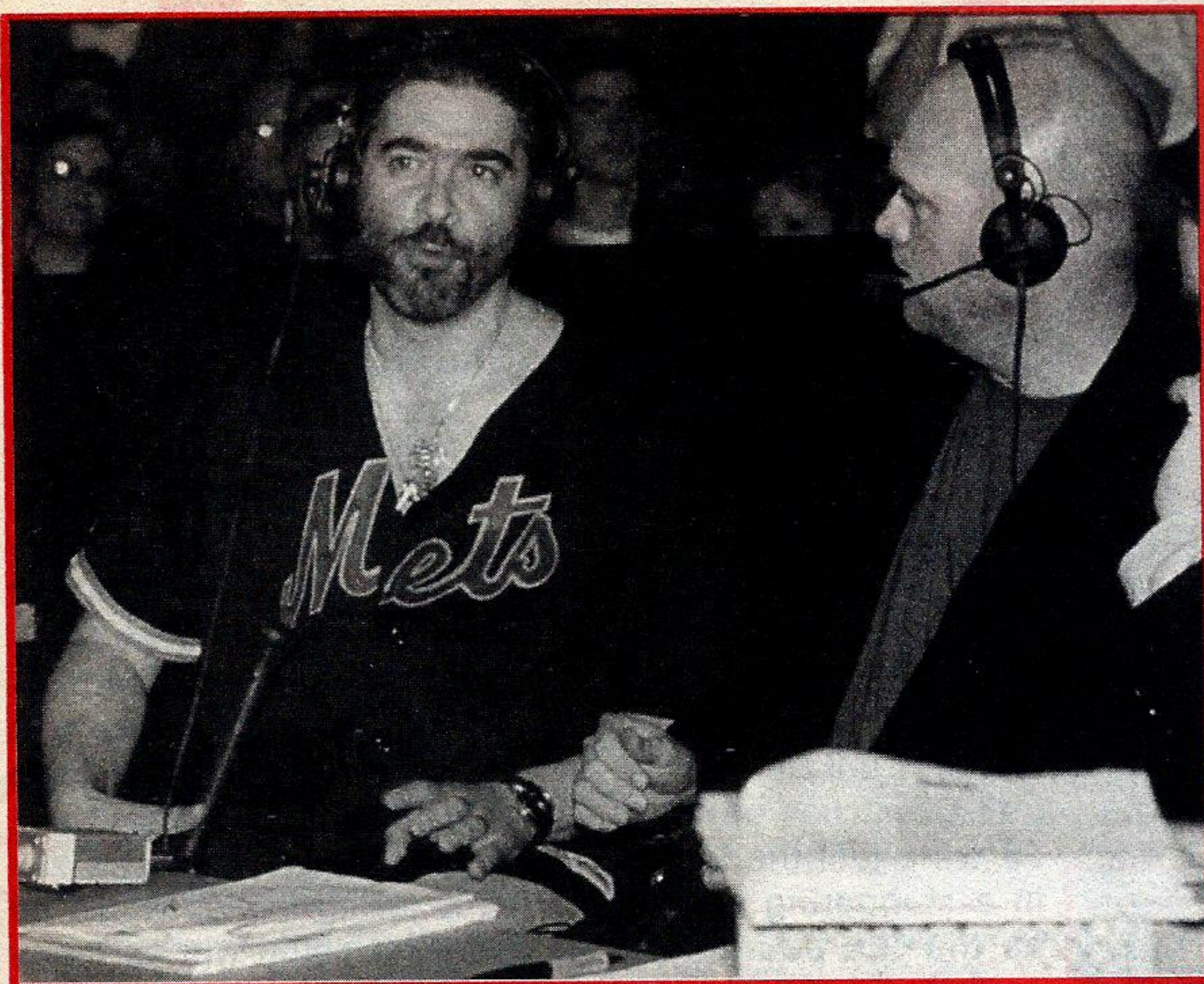
At long last, WCW is finally getting it right! By that I mean it is finally putting two people in the ring who can create excitement together.

For me, Scott Steiner vs. Tank Abbott is like instant fireworks. If you know anything about what either man is like away from the ring, you'll know that things could really get

scary whenever these guys hook up.

I hope Eric Bischoff will play his hand right and let this feud run its course. It has the potential to be one of the greatest feuds of the last five years.

JIM GRETCHEL
Louisville, KY



Although broadcaster Scott Hudson has been able to get along with Vince Russo, reader Nate Tsutsumi is not fond of the WWF transplant. He also doesn't like the emergence of WCW's New Blood.

First it was the NWO black and white. Then came the NWO red and black. Now comes The New Blood? Do Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo really believe that Rey Misterio Jr., Konnan, Billy Kidman, Juventud Guerrera, Vampiro, and all the other fill-ins are the future of WCW? From where I'm standing, these guys are all preliminary wrestlers, and Bischoff and Russo make them out to be main-eventers.

The only thing worse than going back to work at the crack of dawn on Monday morning is listening to Russo bring Ric Flair's private life into public view in such an unfriendly manner. Russo is either tired of being the underdog, needs a vacation, or needs a shoulder to cry on because WCW no longer revolves around him.

In the midst of this "out with the old and in with the new" controversy, I am glad that Flair, Lex Luger, Hulk Hogan, Sting, Arn Anderson, and even Elizabeth oppose such a movement. In my opinion, this movement

will be temporary, just like the Seattle grunge music craze.

NATE TSUTSUMI
Seattle, WA

MIGHTY PLEASED

I thoroughly enjoyed "Matt Brock Remembers ... The Mighty Igor" (July 2000). Igor was one of the most entertaining wrestlers of his era, and I was fortunate enough to see most of his career unfold both on TV and at the local arena.

Igor was a good-natured man who always made time for his fans. I still have an autographed program he signed in the early-'70s.

Thank you, Matt Brock, for bringing back lots of great memories.

LINDA KRANTZ
New York, NY

YOU WANT MORE?

With all the wrestling on television these days, I think there should be a 24-hour wrestling network.

Imagine watching great wrestling action for seven days a week,

(Continued on page 50)

Wrestler

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WHAT'S

Happening

By Dan Murphy

JUST WHEN IT LOOKED like someone might bring stability to the WCW World title picture, **Kevin Nash** put an end to his third title reign after only six days by relinquishing the strap to **Ric Flair** on May

29. But despite Nash's good intentions, Flair was once again robbed of the title by **Jeff Jarrett**, who capitalized on interference by **David Flair**, **Vince Russo**, and members of R & B Security.

The two title switches on May 29 were just the latest in a staggering string, as the "20 pounds of gold" has been changing hands more often than the WWF hardcore title. Ric Flair's 15th world title reign (which started on May 16) came to an end after only seven days (before Nash returned the belt), while Jeff Jarrett's third reign lasted all of 24 hours. The irony of all of this is that Nash has proven himself to be a potentially dominant champion—which is exactly what WCW needs right now. As for whether Nash has what it takes to go from being part of the gang that changes rules and runs interference to being Russo and **Eric Bischoff's** main target remains unseen, at least for now.

Besides Nash and Flair, Jarrett has another pressing problem to worry about. **Bill Goldberg** is back! Goldberg has already picked up the gauntlet thrown down by **Tank Abbott**,

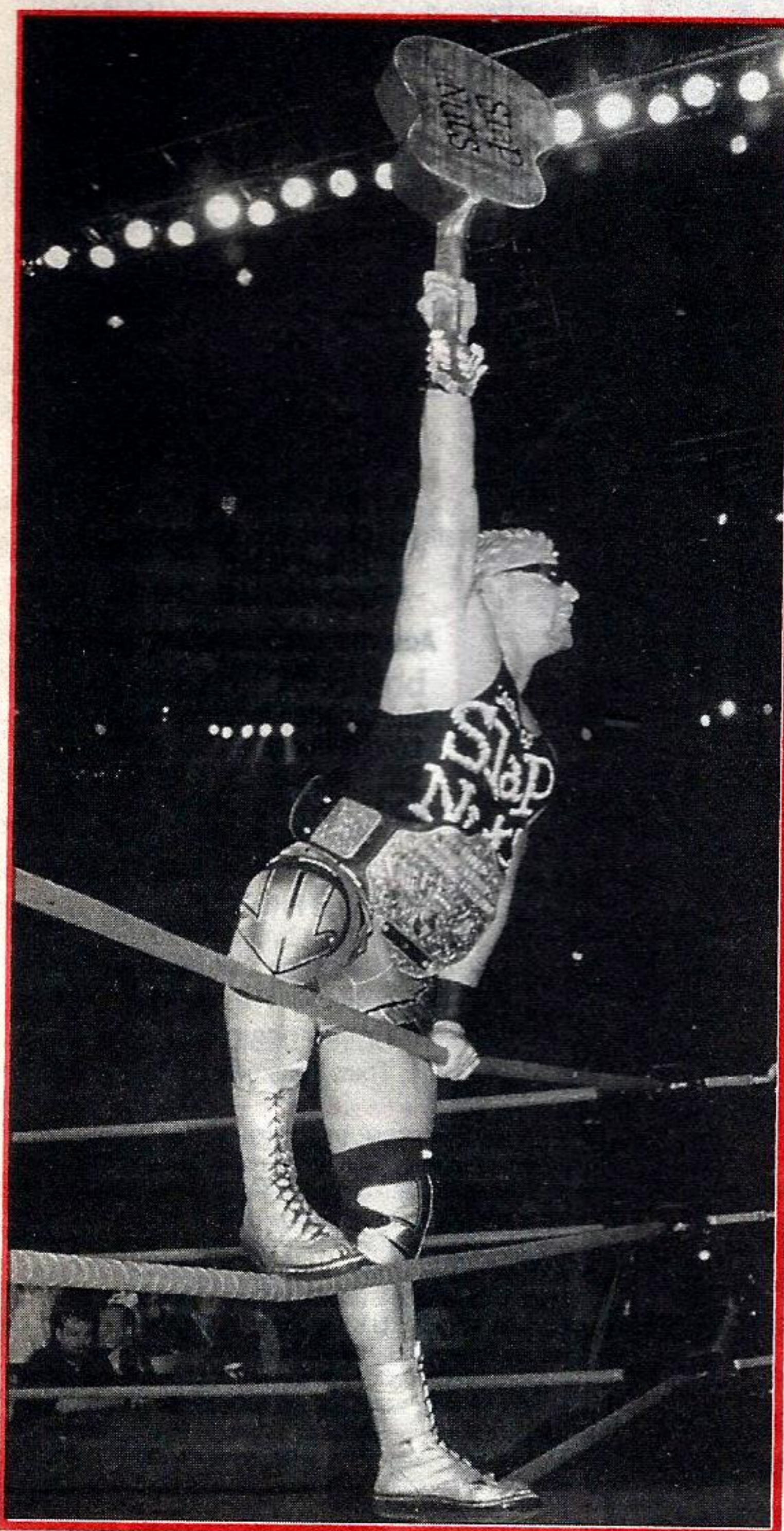
and if "Da Man's" five-month hiatus from the ring doesn't hinder him too much, he should dominate Abbott. Since Goldberg already has some problems with Jarrett, it won't take him long to target the big gold belt.

On a side note, sources say Jarrett is telling friends would be thrilled if he could win as many world titles in as short a time as possible so that he could eclipse the "Nature Boy's" 16-title mark. If Jarrett is really interested in doing this, it looks like WCW is in for some more very turbulent times.

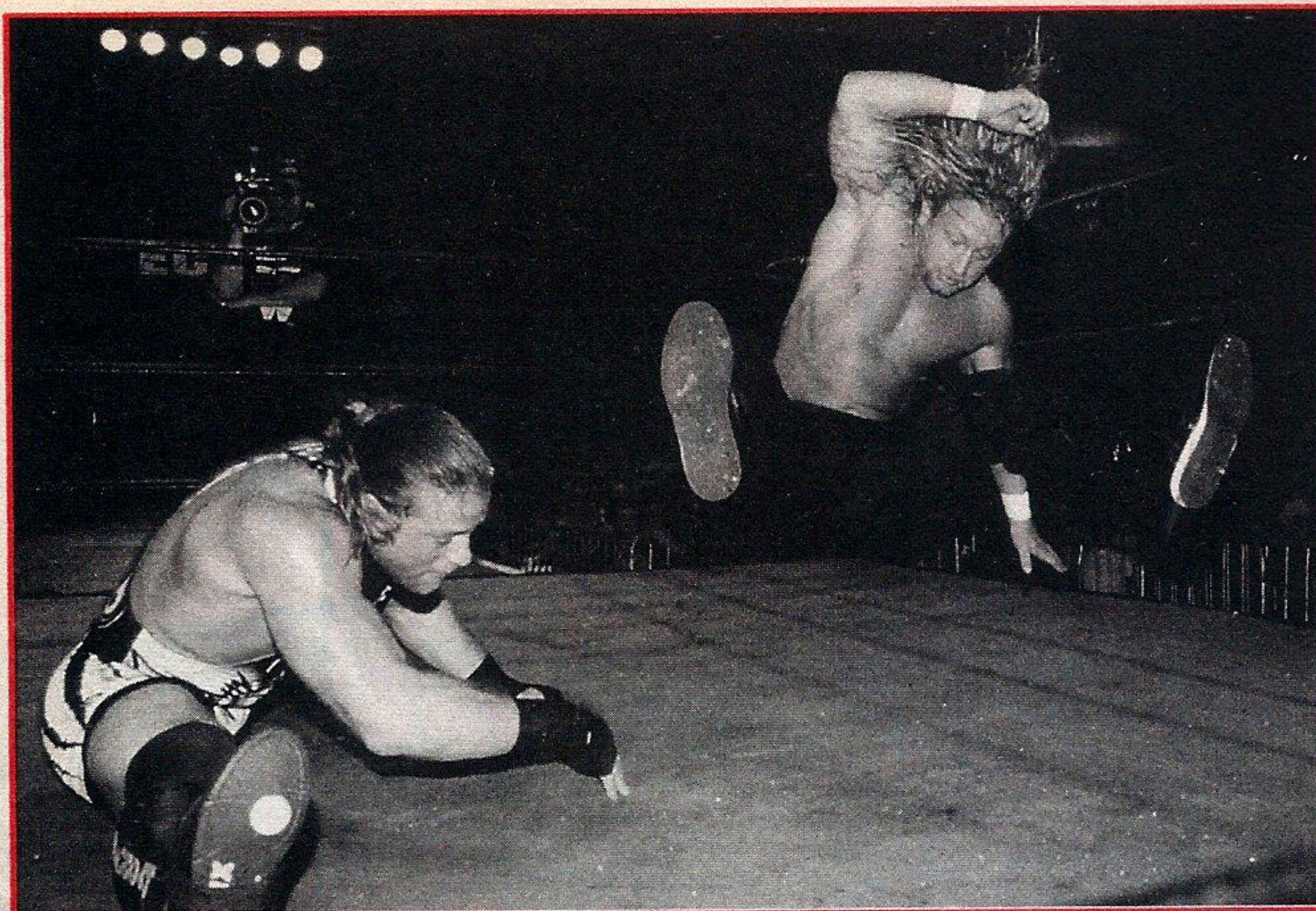
Where does all of this leave **Scott Steiner**? "The Genetic Freak" has become one of the promotion's most popular competitors. A sustained feud between a rulebreaking Steiner and a popular Goldberg seems like a natural money-maker. Let's see if Russo and Bischoff subtly try to make this matchup a reality—culminating, say, in a Starrcade main event.

The Undertaker has never been an easy guy to figure out, and his return at Judgment Day characteristically raised more questions than it answered. What was his reason for interfering in the last minutes (or, after the last minute according to the replay) of **The Rock's** WWF World defense against **Triple-H**? Did he attack Triple-H because he was still bitter about their ego clash that led to this dissolution of **The Corporate Ministry**? Or by causing the DQ, is this somehow the beginning of a Ministry reunion?

"My motives are what they



WCW World champion Jeff Jarrett intends to eclipse Ric Flair as the federation's most prodigious titleholder. To do that, he'll have to beat Flair, Kevin Nash, and most likely Bill Goldberg. Good luck, Jeff!



After finally defeating Rob Van Dam after a series of grueling matches, Jerry Lynn has received several shots at the ECW World title. And all this after turning rulebreaker.

have always been—to do what I need to do to punish my enemies and win titles,” Undertaker said. “Having me around the WWF again is going to give a lot of people some sleepless nights.” I wonder what **Kane**, **Paul Bearer**, and ‘Taker’s abandoned former teammate, **The Big Show**, have to say about that. Hey, maybe this will give us the chance to see “The ShowTaker.” Show had surgery on his knee following his match against **Shane McMahon** at Judgment Day and was expected to return to action in about six weeks.

As upset as The Rock was about the outcome of Judgment Day, it didn’t affect his decision to stick with the WWF. The federation is reporting that The Rock has inked a new five-year deal.

Jerry Lynn’s turn to rulebreaking is getting him the things that all his years of playing to the crowd never did. First, at Hardcore Heaven, he finally got a win over **Rob Van Dam**. More recently, it has gotten him shots at the ECW World title. Thus far, **Justin Credible** has been able to hold on to the strap, but Lynn remains determined.

“Everybody’s always raving about my matches against Van Dam,” Lynn said. “Imagine seeing those same matches with the World title at stake.”

A little bit of **Lita**: It looks like Lita and **Essa Rios** had a bit of a meltdown when the fiery redhead took exception to Rios’ preoccu-

pation with **The Godfather’s** ladies. But don’t shed any tears for the former **Miss Congeniality**—she’s not quite all alone in the WWF. She was trained by **Matt** and **Jeff Hardy**, and there is a real chance she’ll rejoin the brothers if her differences with Rios prove to be irreconcilable. Having Lita in their corner should be just what the Hardys need to regain their spark. They’ve been in a rut since WrestleMania 2000.

About 2,500 fans came out to Xavier University in Cincinnati on May 25 to honor the memory of “**Loose Cannon**” **Brian Pillman**. **D-Lo Brown** teamed with

Eddie Guerrero to beat **Perry Saturn** and **Dean Malenko** in the main event of the interfederational memorial show, but it was the clash between **Chris Benoit** and **Steven Regal** that captured the buzz after the show. Benoit ultimately managed to put Regal away with the Crippler

(Continued on page 51)

THE BOTTOM LINE *By Ted Smith*

WHY REFEREES DON'T WORK AS 7-11 CLERKS...



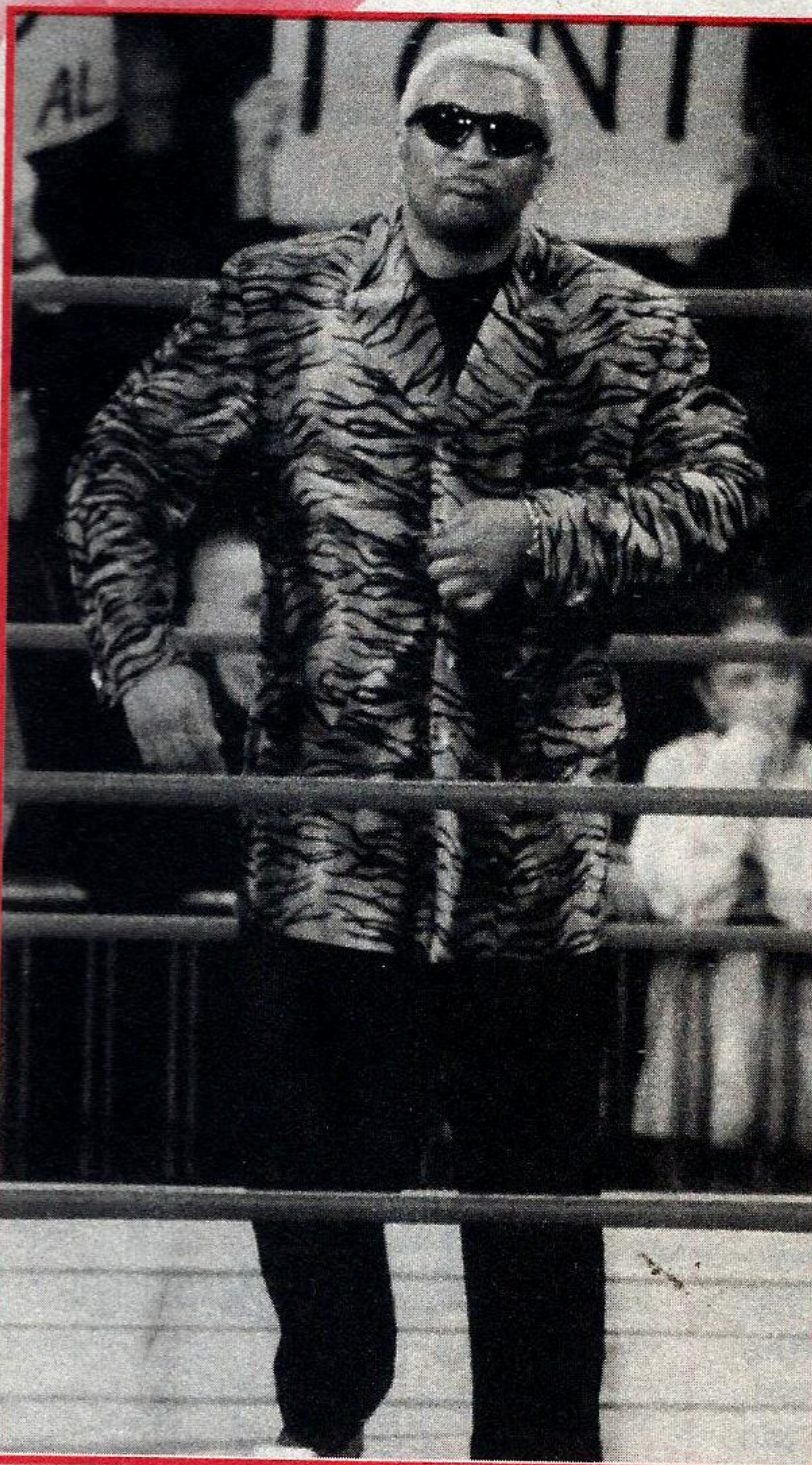
Check out Ted's other wrestling cartoons at wrestletoons.com

NO Holds Barred

with Will Welsh

IMAGINE THIS, IF you will: It's Monday night. You're at home watching Ernest "The Cat" Miller make his entrance at a jam-packed Pepsi Arena in Denver, Colorado. Throughout the arena, fans hold up signs in tribute to "The Cat" and start chanting his name. Then, with the arena crowd in absolute hysterics, Ernest gets on the microphone and proclaims, "I am the greatest!" It's a scene you really don't want to miss, but you decide to flip the channel to the competition anyway.

Rikishi Phatu is in the middle of the ring. The lights are dim, but the First Union Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is awash in color. Suddenly, Rikishi's music cues up, and he starts his Samoan two-step. The Philadelphia crowd audibly groans. As for you, you can't take another second of the guy who does that stink face thing. You hit the "last channel" button on your TV remote, hoping to catch the end of Ernest Miller's promo. You're lucky—he's still talking. In fact, he's bragging about how he's going to put a whoopin' on some-



If Ernest "The Cat" Miller were in the WWF, he would be one of wrestling's biggest stars, argues Will Welsh.

Okay, it's time to come back to reality. The scenario I just presented to you—Rikishi in WCW and Ernest Miller in the WWF—is, of course, fictional. But if it were the case, if both wrestlers switched federations, wrestling fans would probably love Miller and disdain Phatu—and for one simple reason: Wrestling fans are predisposed to worship the WWF and dismiss WCW.

How do I know this? Because if WCW and the WWF were equals in the minds of wrestling fans, it is my opinion that Ernest Miller would be one of the most popular wrestlers in sports entertainment today.

The fact that wrestling fans favor the WWF over WCW is not a new revelation, but if you were to ask me why, I couldn't give you an answer. I could, however, give you my best guess.

WCW is still a relatively new entity. In fact, it's not even 10 years old yet. We celebrate that anniversary next January. Yes, WCW was

(Continued on page 56)

body. Why you changed the channel in the first place, you'll never know. *Whatever WCW does, you think, it's always the same—and it always stinks.*

By
Harry
Burkett

Justin

HAS JUSTIN CREDIBLE packed his bags yet? Credible may know what I'm talking about. Most people in ECW know what I'm talking about. I'm sure Paul Heyman knows what I'm talking about.

The dastardly Justin Credible is poised to dominate ECW for a long time. I can't think of a man who can stop him. Well, maybe Rob Van Dam. Credible ended Tommy Dreamer's ECW World title reign in less than 10 minutes. He emerged victorious in a three-way dance against Dreamer and Lance Storm at Hardcore Heaven. In fact, it was Credible who pinned his former Impact Player partner, Storm, in that encounter. Before that moment, Credible and Storm were viewed as equals, two men who would carry the federation into the 21st century. In that one match, Credible proved he was superior to his teammate and put a huge blotch on Storm's record before he could jump to WCW.

What would stop Credible from jumping to either WCW or the WWF? The thrill of being ECW's top man, the leverage of being World champion during contract negotiations, and the duration of his current contract would encourage Credible to stay.

However, there's a reality ECW has dealt with since the beginning. The average mid-carder in WCW or the WWF has the potential to earn more money than ECW's World heavyweight champion. The greater exposure, in itself, can improve a wrestler's market value.

Consider the short list of the greatest ECW champions. Not long after they captured ECW gold, Mike Awesome, Shane Douglas, Bam Bam Bigelow, Sabu, Raven, and The Sandman caught the attention of WCW talent scouts. They recruited Mikey Whipwreck on the sole basis that he pinned Steve Austin in a three-way ECW title match in 1995. Terry Funk's dramatic ECW title victory, despite his age, encouraged the WWF to pair him with Cactus Jack. The WWF's recruitment of Tazz, even while he was World champion, made the most fervent ECW supporters face a discouraging fact.

ECW is a farm team for WCW and the WWF.

I won't fault WCW or the WWF for doing this, because it's only natural that they would want the best wrestlers in the sport to be on their respective rosters. But I think both federations must get smug satisfaction out of luring ECW's top stars after ECW has spent years making these guys stars. By raiding ECW's talent pool, WCW and the WWF avoid some of the hard work that goes into cultivating future stars on their own.

ECW nourishes the Kid Kashes and Simon Diamonds as embryos, develops them into Jerry Lynns and Yoshihiro Tajiris at the fetal stage, then, at the end of the birth canal, out pop Tazzes and Justin Credibles. Then the newborn stars receive the "callup" to WCW or the WWF.

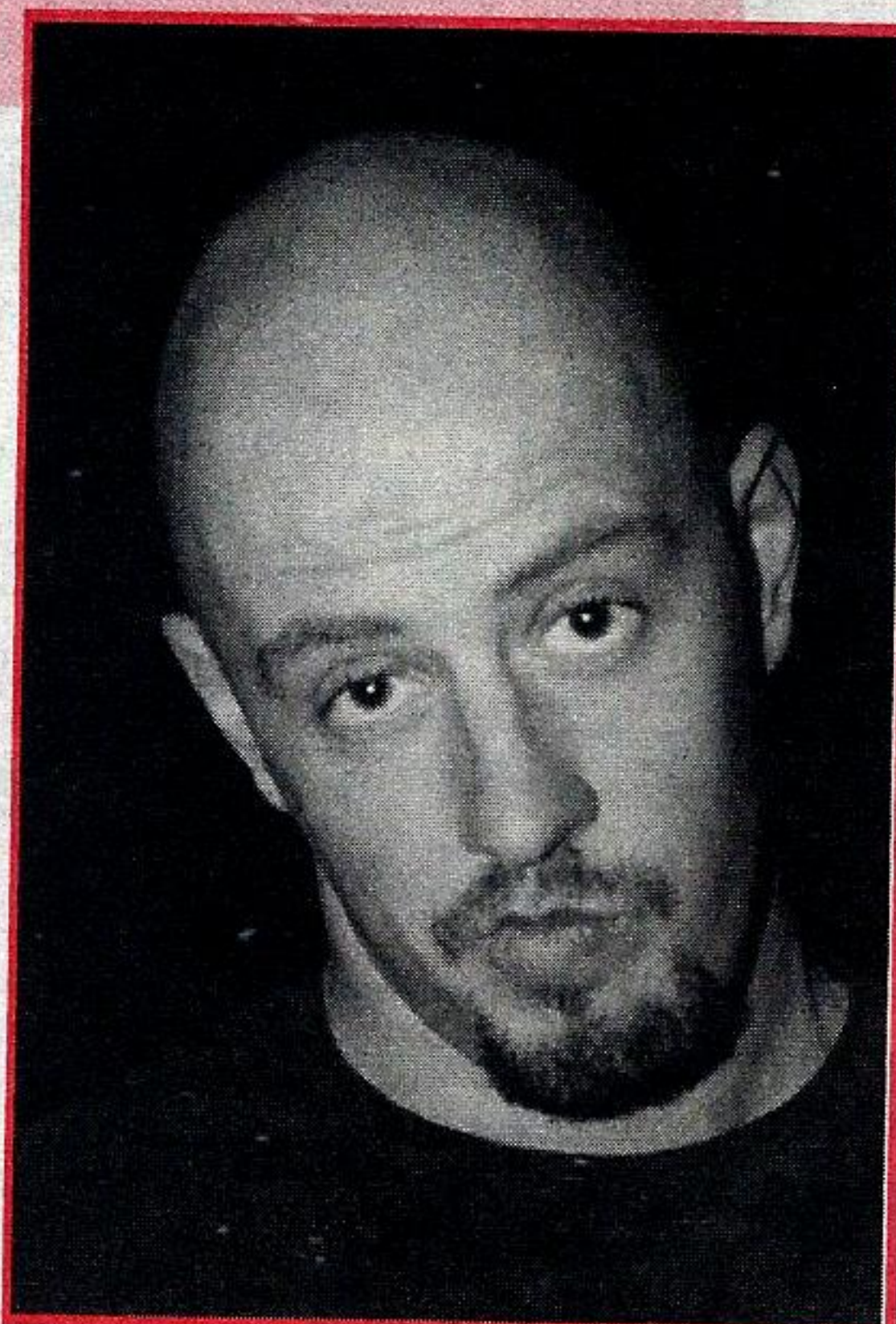
This may not last. As ECW prospers, it is able to secure its top wrestlers in longer-term contracts. Rob Van Dam, who had been working under a handshake agreement for years, recently signed a five-year deal.

But what's to stop a federation like WCW from seizing their talent anyway, then paying off ECW with a huge cash settlement, as it did in the case of Mike Awesome? Those are situations ECW will have to deal with on an individual basis. In its infancy as a national company, ECW may be better

off accepting cash settlements instead of spending its somewhat limited resources on legal fees.

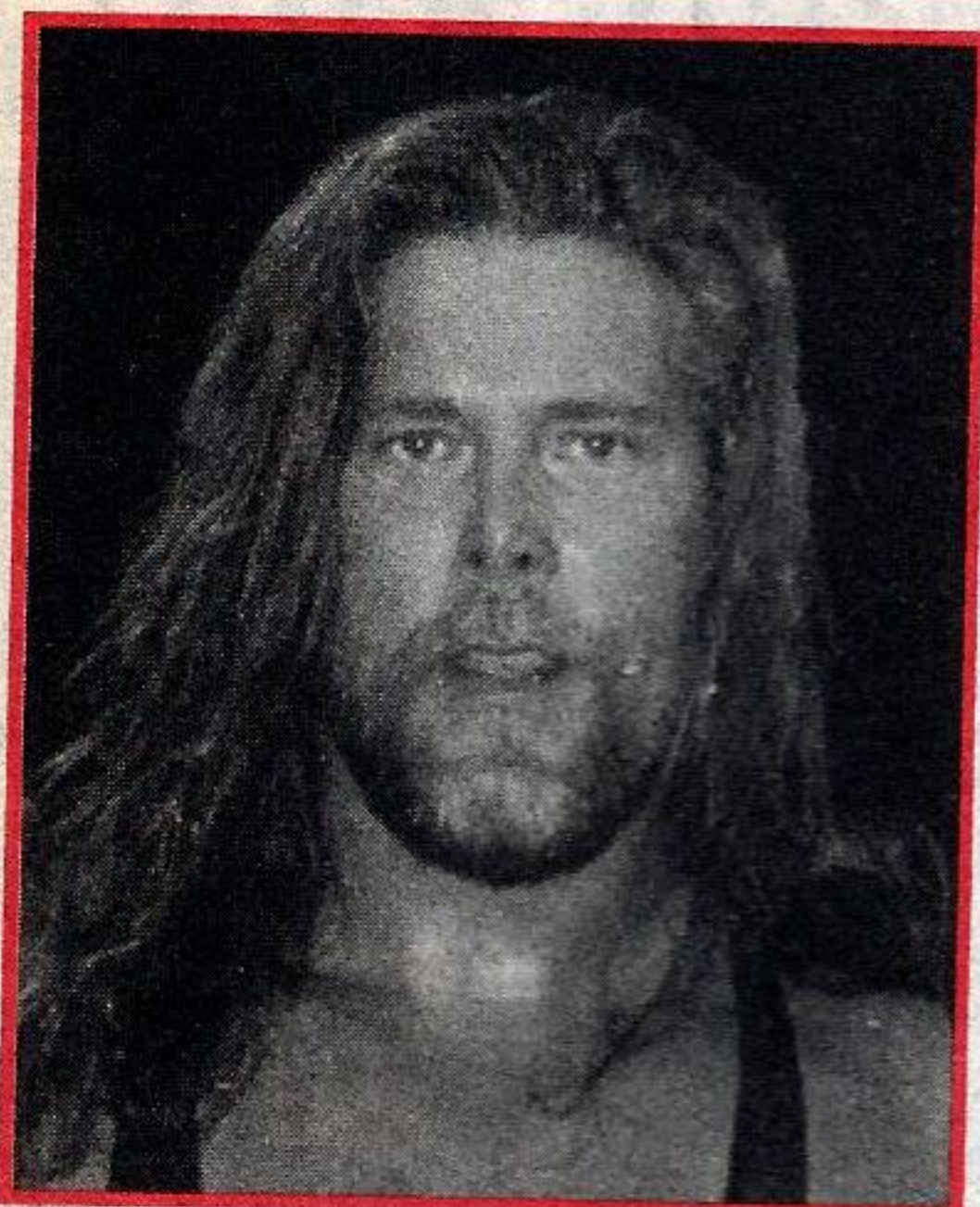
What will happen if a talent scout from WCW or the WWF contacts Justin Credible? If history is any indication, he will accept the offer. But Credible has already had a taste of the big time early in his career, the WWF to be specific, and he was sent down to Memphis without hesitation. Maybe Credible will remember that when the big time comes calling again.

Personally, I don't want to see Credible leading Elizabeth on a tether-rope for Vince Russo or trying to pin Crash Holly in a supermarket aisle for Vince McMahon. □



Credible: ECW For life?

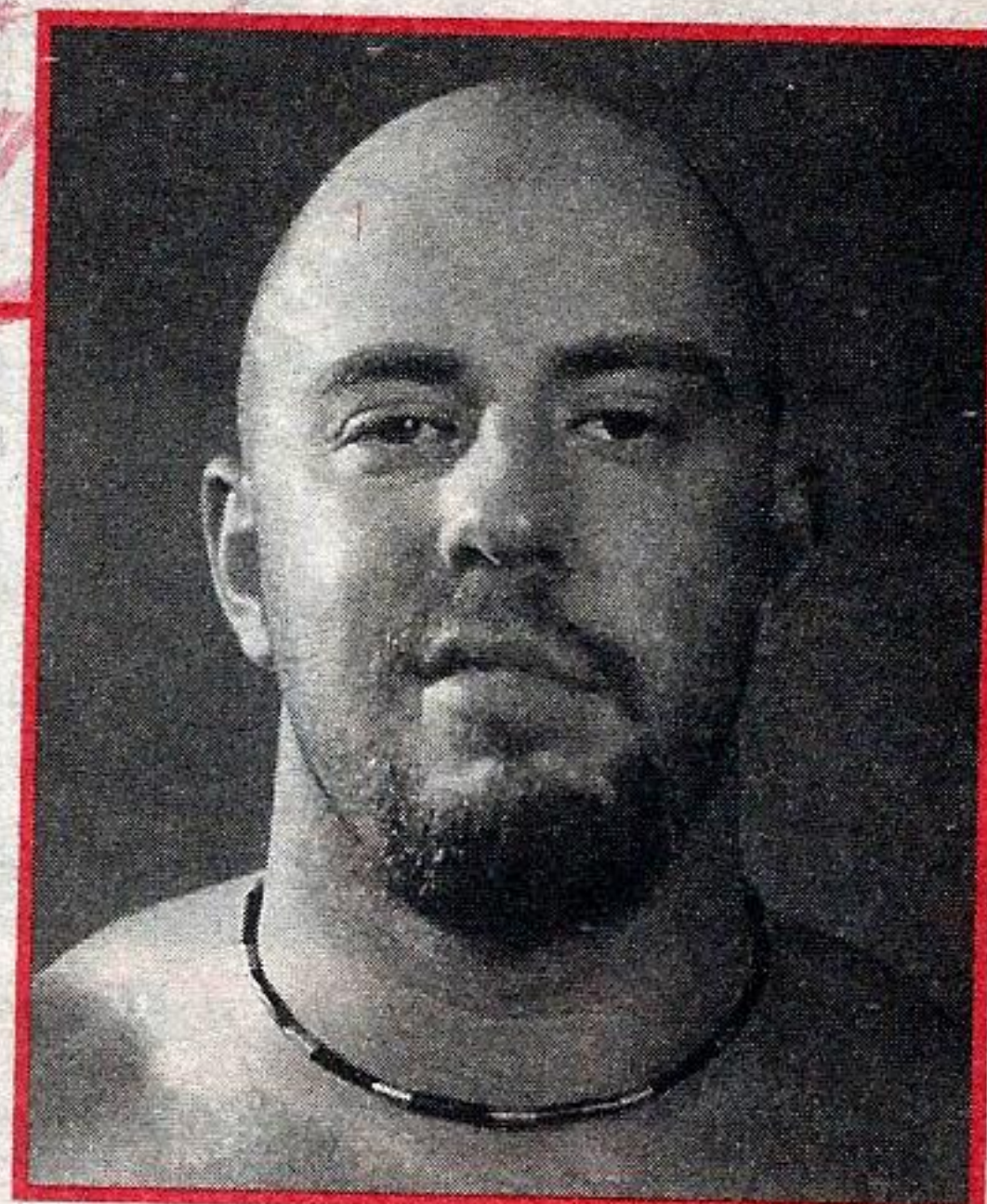
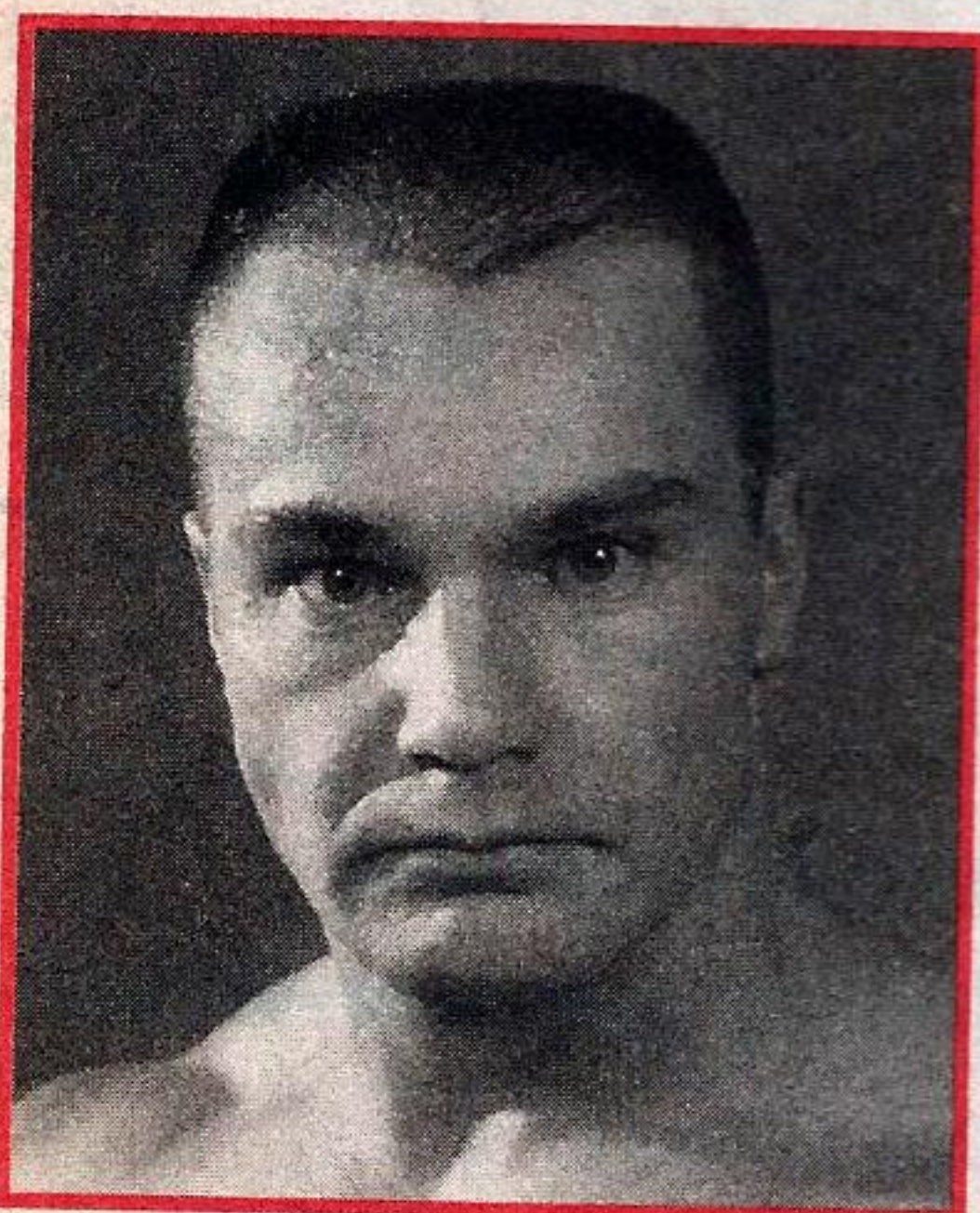
THUMB UP



Thumbs Up to Kevin Nash. He has been a good guy and a bad guy. We've seen him as Diesel, the WWF World champion, and as Kevin Nash, the WCW World champion. He has been the leader of the NWO and a man who has done very well on his own. But it's good to see him putting his strength and perseverance to work in his feud against The New Blood. We're not so sure fans can count on Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair, who tend to have selfish agendas, but it looks like they can count on Nash. Let's face it: He wouldn't have lost the WCW World title if he wasn't so concerned about setting things right with Vince Russo.

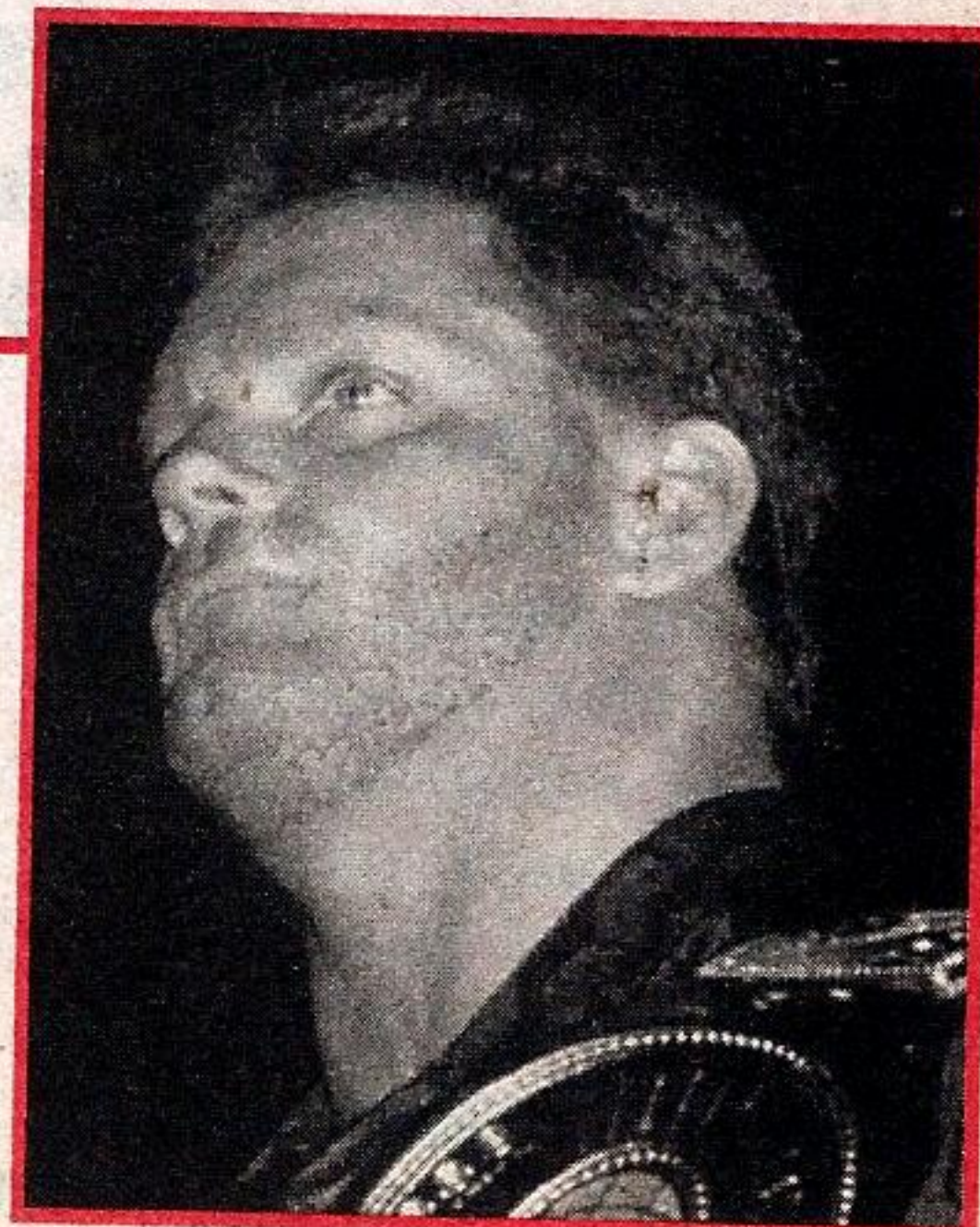
Thumbs Up to Justin Credible. Although we didn't appreciate the way he won the ECW World heavyweight title (by ambushing Tommy Dreamer and challenging him to an impromptu match), this much can't be doubted: In just a few years, Credible has gone from being a laughable undercard guy with a funny name and a silly gimmick to being one of the hottest wrestlers in the world. A pretty good champion, too, and a worthy flag bearer for ECW.

Credible proved himself with numerous title defenses against Dreamer, Lance Storm, and other ECW contenders. He has proven his resiliency.

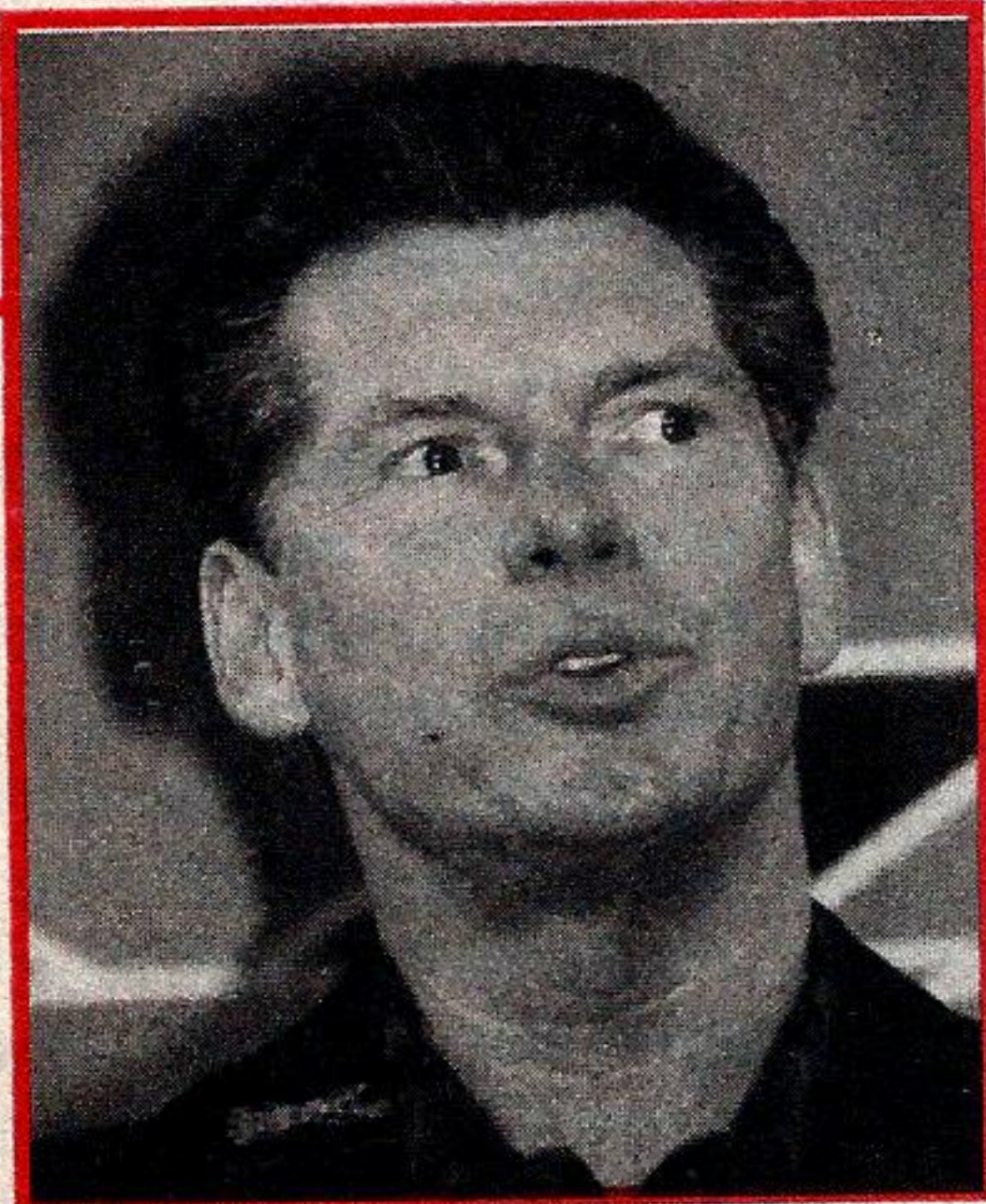


Thumbs Up to Lance Storm. The former ECW star surprised some people when he signed with WCW. Many wondered whether Storm was making the right move, or whether he would have been better off jumping to the WWF or staying with ECW, but we're encouraged by Storm's reasons: "While some people have had bad experiences there, others have done quite well," he said. "Every company offers different opportunities to each person who works there. Just because it was a bad experience for one person doesn't mean it will be for others. I can only judge WCW on how it treats me, and I'm hoping for the best." A good attitude is always the best start.

Thumbs Up to Chris Benoit. We're glad to see "The Crippler" finally getting the respect he deserves in the WWF. Sure, there's no doubt that he cheated in his Intercontinental title match against Chris Jericho at Judgment Day, but in the grand scheme of things, Benoit hitting Jericho with a knee brace is nothing compared to some of the stuff that passes for legal these days (like hitting an opponent with a cinder block, TV monitors, chairs, etc.). Benoit is simply an outstanding wrestler whose space in the spotlight is well-deserved. But once, just once, we'd like to see Benoit and Jericho go at it in a fair fight.



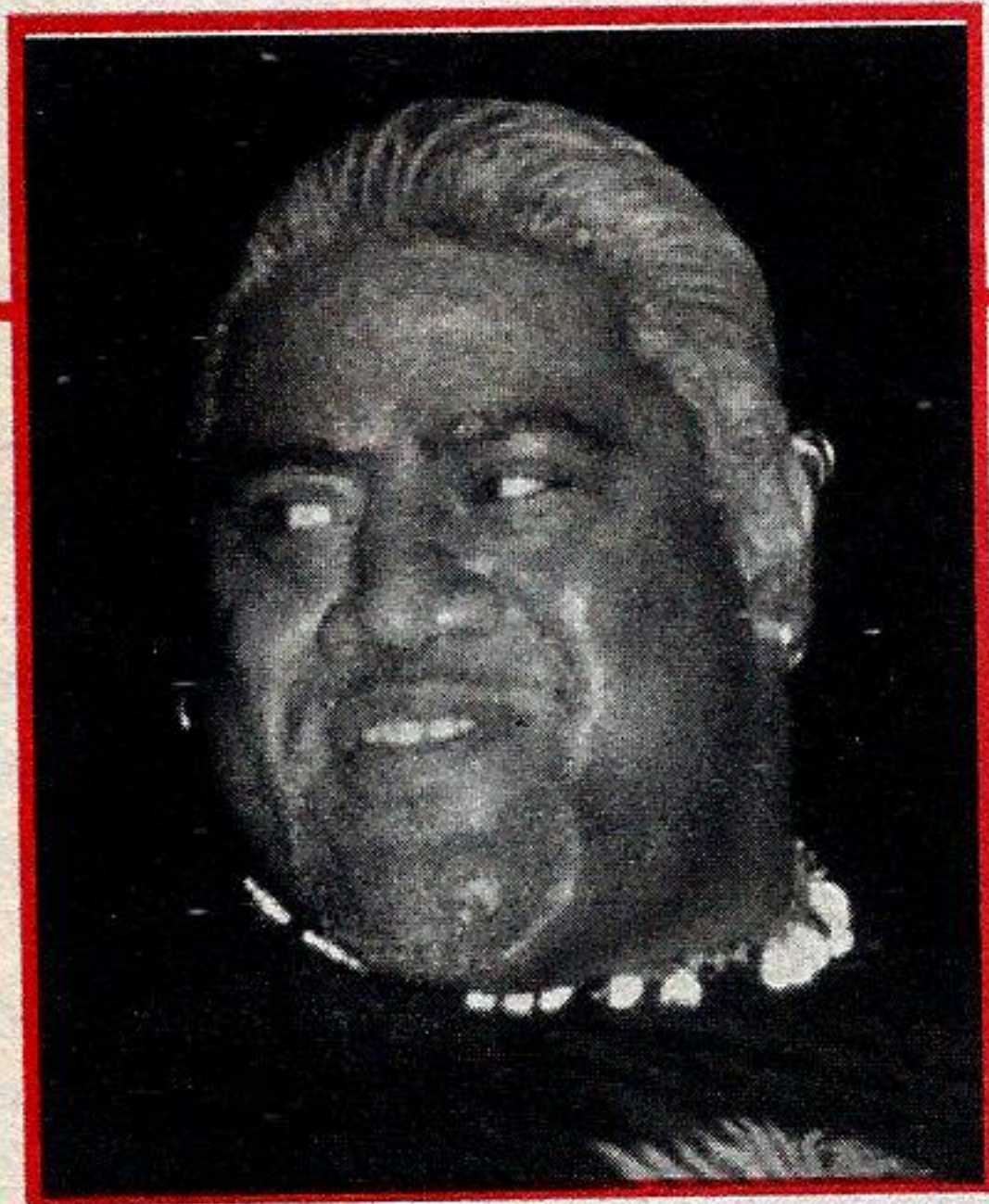
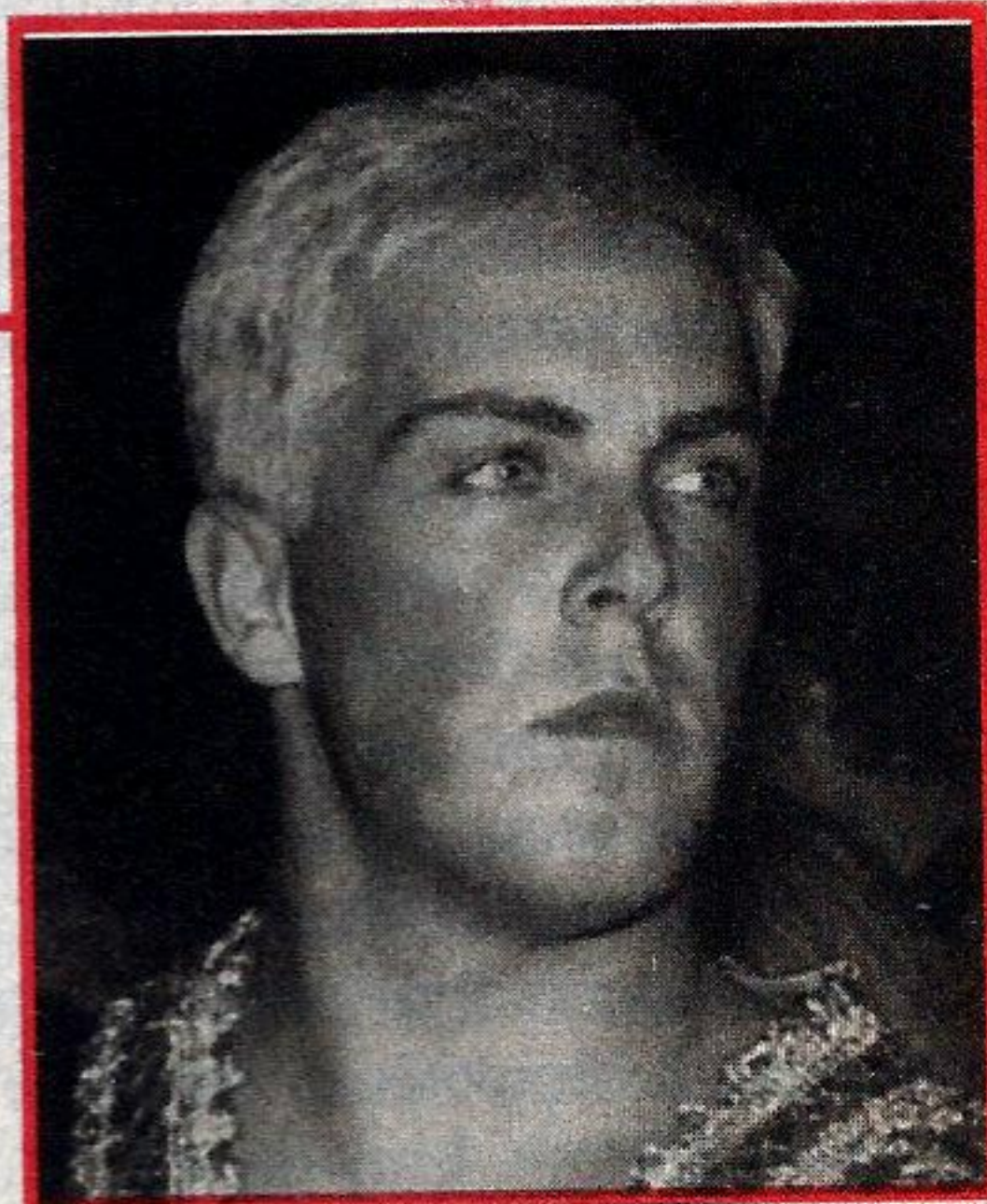
THUMB **Down**



Thumbs Down to Vince McMahon. A few months ago, we gave the WWF owner a Thumbs Up for taking control of the situation and preventing Stephanie and Shane McMahon from running The Rock out of town. Of course, soon enough, it became clear that Vince and his children *all* wanted nothing more than to get rid of The Rock. Forget about how little business sense this makes: The Rock is undoubtedly the WWF's biggest star. Instead, let's focus on Mr. McMahon, who changes hats so many times that it's nearly impossible to tell what side he's on. Maybe all he cares about is the bottom line.

Thumbs Down to David Flair. In this month's "Q & A," David Flair defends his decision to participate in the tasteless funeral for his father's career. Well, we'd like to go on record as disapproving of David Flair's actions regardless of whether he really considers Ric Flair to be his father. The fact of the matter is that The New Blood went too far when it brought out the coffin, and David went too far in playing along. Even more tasteless was when David pulled a

Rolex watch out of the coffin. David and Ric clearly have personal problems that need to be solved—in *private*.



Thumbs Down to Rikishi Phatu. There's no doubt that the man formerly known as Headshrinker Fatu has become one of the most popular wrestlers in the world. There's also no doubt about why he has become one of the most popular wrestlers in the world: because of his big butt, which he barely encases in thong-type tights. Now, we have no trouble with Rikishi's ring attire. He can wear whatever he wants. Our question, however, is about the possible health problems involved when Rikishi backs it up into the face of a defenseless opponent. Is this really necessary? The WWF should ban Rikishi's stink face.

Thumbs Down to Kimberly. There's no doubt that Kimberly is a beautiful woman. But let's face it: There are beautiful women everywhere. Kimberly made it as far as she did in wrestling in part because of her husband (or ex-husband), "Diamond" Dallas Page. It was bad enough that she betrayed DDP, but who knew just how shallow she was? Complaining about not being treated like a star? Demanding her own dressing room? Ordering Liz around like Liz were her assistant? Demanding that everyone around her cater to her needs? Is it any wonder DDP spanked her at the May 23 *Thunder*? She's acting like a spoiled brat!



C O R R E S P O N D E N T S

Reports

Milwaukee, WI (Correspondent—Steve Kelley): Justin Credible proved to be an incredible ECW World champion when he defeated Lance Storm, his former tag team partner, at Hardcore Heaven. This match also proved to be Storm's last in ECW before he headed off to WCW.

Before the bout even started, Credible threatened to throw the ECW World title belt into the trash if he faced anyone other than Storm. Tommy Dreamer, who was expected to challenge Credible and Storm in a three-way dance, tried to get to the ring, but security held him back as Storm walked to ringside.

Storm began the match strong and used a dropkick to Credible's head to knock him down. But Credible soon opened a gash on Storm's forehead. Both men jockeyed for the advantage for the next few minutes, but they saw almost every offensive move they tried countered by the other man. For instance, Credible tried to execute a tombstone piledriver on Storm, but Storm reversed it and positioned Credible for a tombstone piledriver of his own. Credible reversed this into a reverse DDT, but Storm blocked it and finally executed a Northern Lights suplex.

Later, Storm did more damage by hip tossing Justin over the top rope and through a ringside table. Once the champ was back in the ring, Storm cinched on a half-Boston crab. Francine, Credible's valet, saved Justin by nailing Storm with her shoe. This brought Storm's

valet, Dawn Marie, into the ring for a spirited catfight.

While the two women were going at it in the ring, Credible grabbed Dawn Marie and nailed her with a spinning tombstone piledriver, thereby ending the squabble. Storm quickly nailed Credible with a piledriver for a quick two-count, then tried it again and got another two-count.

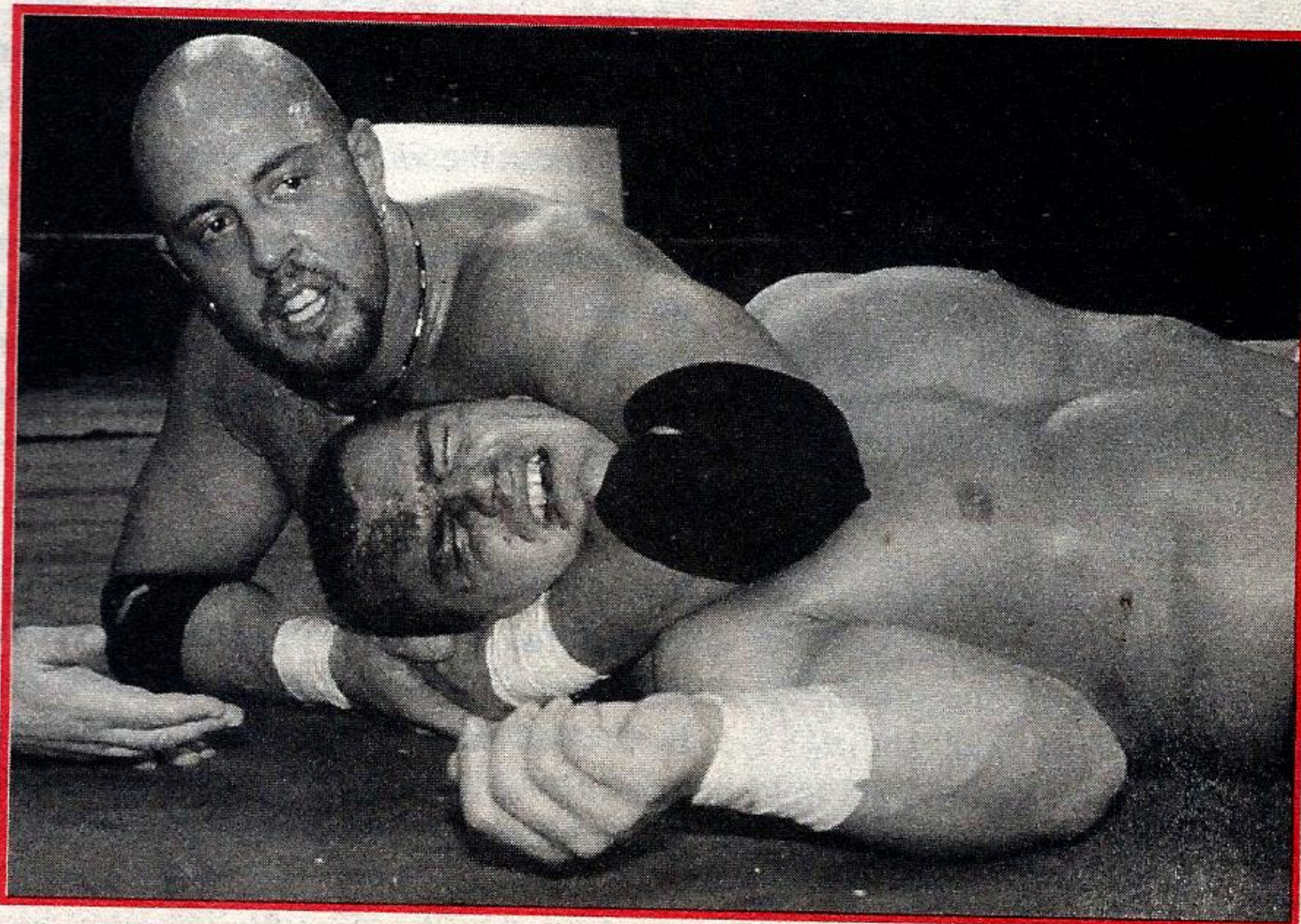
Both men tried desperately to get a pinfall the rest of the way, but it took a spinning tombstone piledriver from the ropes to garner Justin Credible a three-count for the clean win.

In other bouts: Masato Tanaka pinned Mahoney ... Little Guido won a three-way match against Simon Diamond and Mikey Whipwreck ... Kid Kash pinned C.W. Anderson ... Chris Chetti & Nova

won a three-way match against Angel & Tony DeVito and Danny Doring & Roadkill ... New Jack defeated Angel ... Yoshihiro Tajiri pinned Steve Corino ... ECW TV champion Rhino defeated The Sandman ... Jerry Lynn pinned Rob Van Dam.

Kansas City, MO (Correspondent—Nancy Burton): Jeff Jarrett fought his way through all three tiers of a multi-tiered cage and outlasted both David Arquette and Dallas Page to regain the WCW World title at Slamboree.

Early on, Arquette did his best to keep up with the wrestlers and even attempted a splash, but he missed. Page beat on Jarrett and at one point whipped him into Arquette, leaving both men in a heap in the corner.



Justin Credible controls his former tag team partner Lance Storm on the mat during their match at Hardcore Heaven. After this bout, Storm quietly left ECW for WCW.

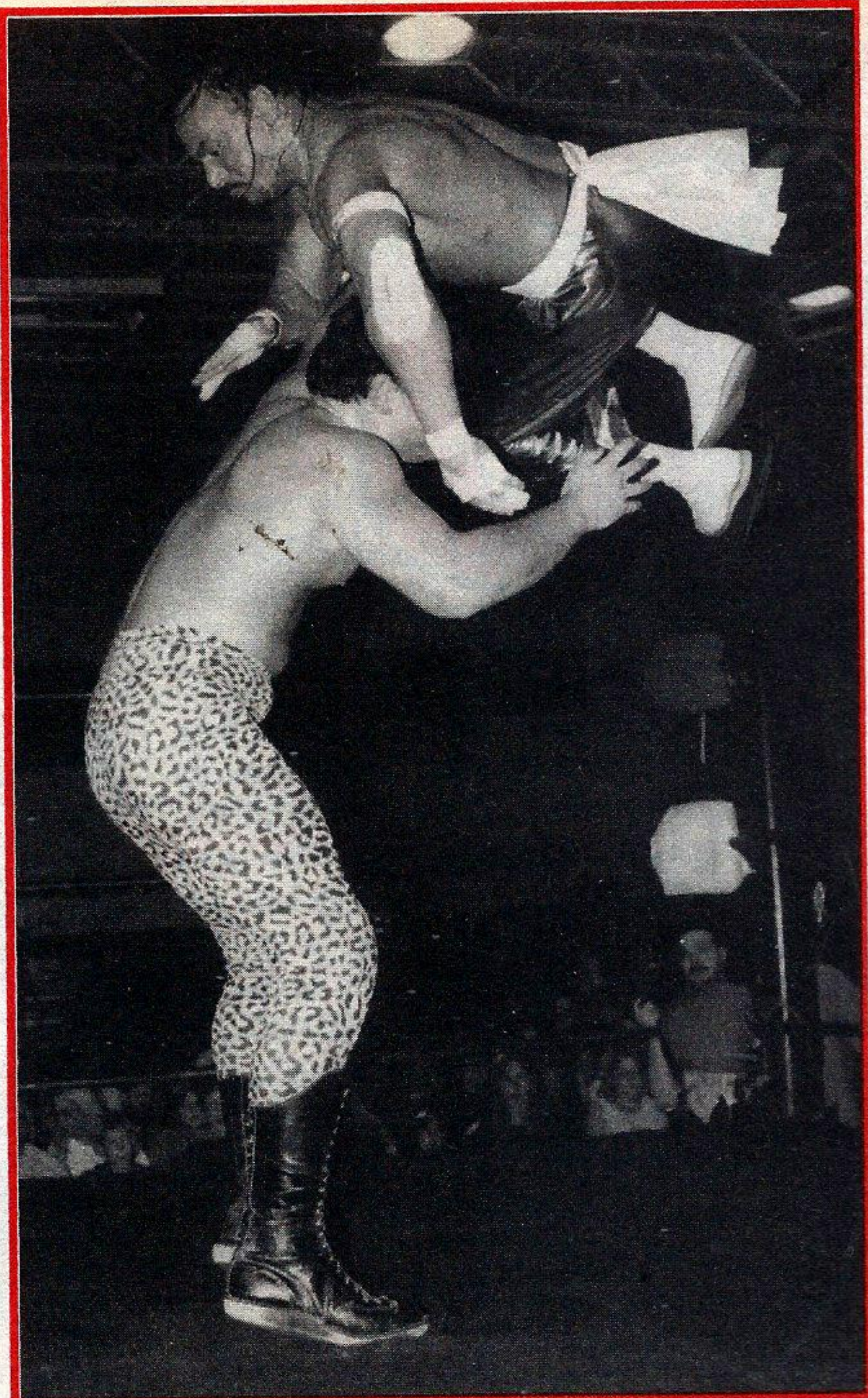
By the time all three wrestlers made it to the second level of the cage, Page and Jarrett were both bleeding. There was a plethora of weapons at the disposal of the combatants on the second level, and all three men made use of them. As Arquette lay dazed in a heap, Page set up a table on the second tier and slammed Jarrett through it.

Arquette eventually made his way up to the third level of the cage and nervously laid down on the floor. While he was shaking, Mike Awesome entered the cage, but Page nailed him with a Diamond cutter on the second level.

Finally, as Page and Jarrett made their way to the third level, they both picked up a guitar from the pile. Arquette hid under a guitar as DDP and Jarrett tried to swat each other with the instruments. Arquette overcame his apparent fear of heights and stood poised to whack Jarrett with a guitar, but he shocked everyone by drilling Page instead. Jarrett then grabbed the World title belt to win the match.

In other bouts: WCW cruiserweight champion Chris Candido (with Tammy) defeated The Artist (with Paisley) ... WCW hardcore champ Terry Funk pinned Norman Smiley & Ralphus in a handicap match ... Shawn Stasiak defeated Curt Hennig ... WCW U.S. champ Scott Steiner beat Captain Rection ... Kanyon wrestled Mike Awesome to a no-contest ... Lex Luger defeated Buff Bagwell ... Shane Douglas pinned Ric Flair ... Sting pinned Vampiro ... Hulk Hogan defeated Billy Kidman (with Torrie Wilson) in a match in which Eric Bischoff was the special guest referee.

Mahanoy City, PA (Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker): NWA-



Sabu launches from the ropes and catches Ace Darling with a swinging DDT. Darling tried vainly to defeat Sabu, but the high-flying madman proved to be too much for him.

Jersey invaded Pennsylvania on this evening, and the fans at the Mahanoy City Area High School saw a main event that they would not soon forget when Ace Darling squared off against Sabu.

Sabu gained an early advantage when he grabbed Darling's leg and pulled it out from under him. With Darling down on the mat, Sabu grabbed his arm and tried to force Darling to submit. Darling refused to give in and fought back, only to have Sabu apply the camel clutch. As Sabu applied pressure to Darling's neck and back, the referee asked Darling if he wanted to submit, but Darling steadfastly refused. Ace eventually managed to fight back and surprise Sabu with a hard superkick to the chin and a hura-

canrana, which Sabu just managed to kick out of before the referee could count to three. When Darling tried for another huracanrana, Sabu caught him and power-bombed him. This time, *Darling* barely managed to kick out before the referee could complete his three-count.

Sabu proceeded to use a series of his trademark high-flying moves, including a running moonsault and a dive onto Darling outside the ring. Sabu also threw Darling into some ringside chairs, but again Darling fought back. At one point, he threw Sabu shoulder-first into a steel corner post. Darling then threw Sabu back in the ring, where he continued to work over the injured shoulder.

Sabu also showed a lot of courage by fighting back, however. He brought a table and chair into the ring and used the chair as a launching pad as he dove onto Darling. He then set up the table in the corner of the ring and threw Darling head-first into it, break-

ing the table in half. Sabu was clearly in charge of the match at that point and scored the pin shortly thereafter.

In other bouts: 911 beat NWA-Jersey heavyweight champion Equalizer by disqualification when referee Fred Richards caught Equalizer hitting 911 with a chair ... The Patriot pinned Gino Caruso ... The Elephant Man (with Fred the Elephant Boy) beat Rocco Dorsey (managed by "Dapper" Johnny Falco) ... Gillberg pinned "Ramblin'" Rich Myers. □

**Send your reports to:
CORRESPONDENTS EDITOR,
Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034**

YOU Asked Us

Q: "My question is for Vince Russo: What exactly is your problem with Elizabeth?"—Rick Bonner, Peoria, IL

A: "I have a question for you, Rick," Russo responded. "Is your TV on when you sit down to watch *Nitro*? Any idiot should be able to see that the only reason I torture Elizabeth is to [tick] off Lex Luger. But I guess that's too difficult for a Midwestern hick like you to figure out. I enjoy getting under Luger's skin. I like watching him seethe. And I really love making him chase me around the



Vince Russo has many duties in WCW, but one of his favorite activities is infuriating Lex Luger. He usually accomplishes this by targeting Elizabeth.

ring. The only thing funnier than that is watching R & B Security beat the snot out of him. Basically, I do it for fun. What can I tell you, making Luger and Liz look like dopes is one of the few perks that comes with having an executive position in WCW. It's not very challenging work, so I have to make it interesting by making Liz do all kinds of crazy things, but it passes the time. And you know what, Rick—it makes my job worthwhile."

...

Q: "I would like to ask Tommy Dreamer a question: Tommy, why did you accept Justin Credible's challenge so soon after beating Tazz for the ECW World title at 'Cyberslam 2000'? I think it cost you the title."—Mindy Rostover, Philadelphia, PA

A: "I think you're right, Mindy," Dreamer agreed. "It did cost me the title. All I can say is that once again, my emotions took over. And Justin did catch me by surprise. Those aren't excuses—they may not even be good reasons—but it's why I agreed to fight him right then and there. Instead of bawling all over the ring, I should have grabbed the belt and got the hell out of there. But winning the ECW World title at the Arena in South Philly, where so much of ECW's history happened, was like a dream come true. So even though I should have noticed Francine at ringside, even though



Tommy Dreamer struggles to get up after losing the ECW World title to Justin Credible. Despite a questionable decision to face Credible moments after he won the title, Dreamer has no regrets.

I should have told Justin Credible, 'We'll do it some other day,' and even though I lost the belt before I got a chance to put it around my waist, I'm not ashamed of what happened that night, and I never will be."

...

Q: "I have a question for the new WWF official spokesperson, Shawn Michaels: Shawn, why did you resign as WWF commissioner to accept a less powerful position in the federation?"—Eileen Ford, Tampa, FL

A: "With all the other commitments in my life, I was unable to fulfill

(Continued on page 57)

Introducing

By Frank Krewda

THE BRUISER

"BRUISER" IS A name reserved for a very select group of wrestlers. So select, in fact, that only two wrestlers, Dick "The Bruiser" Afflis and Frank "Bruiser Brody" Goodish, have ever been *truly* associated with the moniker, even though numerous other Bruisers have competed in various independent promotions for years.

One such Bruiser is Maryland Championship Wrestling's reigning heavyweight champion, Rick "R.J." Meyer. Although Meyer claims to be similar to Afflis in nickname only, certain parallels can be drawn between his style of wrestling and the one used by his late namesake.

"I'm a brawler just like he was," said the 6'2", 295-pound Meyer. "But from what I hear, I'm more of a ring technician than he was. I like to throw a few suplexes. Dick the Bruiser was a living legend in this business—there's no doubt about that. But I don't pattern myself after him."

Given the number of years Meyer has dedicated to the sport, it is easy to understand why he refuses to compete in anyone's shadow, even a shadow as daunting as Afflis'.

"R.J." began his amateur career at age 13, wrestling for the Parkville Recreation Center in Parkville, Maryland. He continued wrestling at Loch Raven High in Towson, Maryland, where he also starred as an offensive lineman. In fact, he was so impressive that in 1994, *The Baltimore Sun* selected Meyer as its Athlete of the Year.



Any man who calls himself The Bruiser runs the risk of offending wrestling fans who remember the original Bruiser, Dick Afflis. Yet MCW fans can't help but notice some of Afflis' toughness in their current heavyweight champion

Jimmy Cicero has given The Bruiser a strong challenge for the MCW heavyweight title, but the champ has turned him away on several occasions. Here he pins Cicero to complete another successful title defense.



In April 1997, Meyer began his professional training at Bonebreakers Pro Wrestling Training Center in Baltimore. He wore out training partners with such regularity that trainers (and MCW veterans) Axl Rotten, Corporal Punishment, and Mark "The Shark" Shrader soon dubbed him "Bruiser."

"It was a pretty simple thing. I was beating up all the other students, so they started calling me a bruiser," Meyer recalled. "Hey, I wanted to get to the top, and if that meant lumping up a few people, I was more than happy to do it."

Meyer's journey to the top officially began on October 23, 1997, in a match with Jimmy Cicero. By July 1998, he was wrestling full-time in MCW.

Wrestling in MCW has been an abject success for Bruiser, who captured the MCW tag team title three times: with Danny Rose and Adam Flash in May 1999, and with

Jerry "The King" Lawler in November 1999. His most significant achievement, however, came on September 5, when he defeated Tom Brandi for the heavyweight title in Dundalk, Maryland. Unfortunately, Romeo Valentino cut Bruiser's reign short on October 27, 1999, but he rebounded and defeated Valentino to reclaim the title on December 4. He's been champ ever since, and a championship reign lasting more than a half-year is certainly a rarity in the sport today.

Bruiser's long second championship reign has been characterized by consistency. He has turned away the very best competition MCW has thrown at him. Veterans like Brandi, Valentino, Cicero, and Julio Fantastico have all tried in vain to pry the title from his grip, and even though he's a fighting champion, Bruiser has occasionally made time to tag with super heavyweights such as King

Kong Bundy (a boyhood favorite of his) and two-time former WWF World heavyweight champion Yokozuna.

Currently, Bruiser is feuding with Cicero and his clique, Total Quality Management. Cicero wants Bruiser's belt so badly that he has enlisted TQM to attack the champion before several key matches. Bruiser countered by bringing in tag team legends The Road Warriors to help him.

"I had to bring out all the heavy guns," Bruiser chuckled. "We beat them up pretty good, but if I know Cicero as well as I think I do, he'll be back real soon. I wouldn't expect anything less."

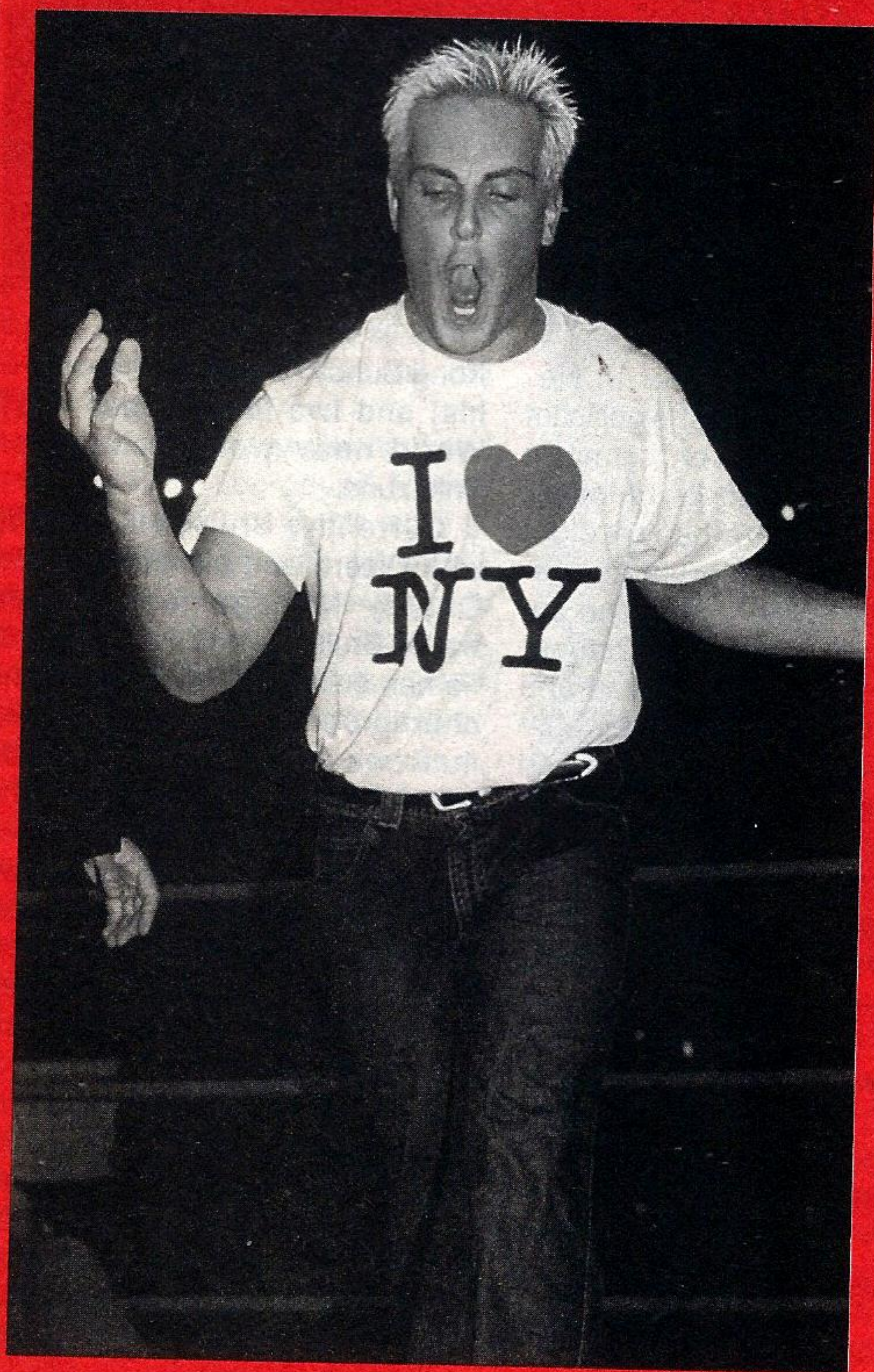
So old-timers, don't hold *this* Bruiser's name against him. Is he Dick Afflis? Hell no. Is he Frank Goodish? Could there ever be another one like Bruiser Brody?

He's The Bruiser, Rick "R.J" Meyer, and there's plenty to like about him. □

Q

DAVID FLAIR

A



AN OPTIMIST WOULD say that David Flair grew up with every advantage. As the oldest son of Ric Flair, David never had to worry about where his next meal was coming from ... or even where his next limousine ride to school was coming from. The son of wrestling royalty, he grew up in the Flair family's palace and reaped all the benefits of his father's hard work.

But pessimists would say that it's not easy being the son of one of the greatest wrestlers in history. One of those pessimists would be David Flair, who knows that his father has a reputation for being one of the most flamboyant and outgoing personalities in wrestling history. And like the child of so many politicians, movie stars, and professional athletes, David Flair spent a lot of time growing up without his father.

Now he's making his father pay.

That David took his anger public isn't the least bit surprising. Wrestling these days has become more and more like a TV soap opera, with Kimberly Page publicly divorcing "Diamond" Dallas Page, Stephanie McMahon marrying Triple-H, and Mick Foley's children becoming the reason for his retirement. But David will do anything to hurt his father, including declaring that his new father is Vince Russo.

Can anything functional come out of this apparently dysfunctional situation? Probably not, realized Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum, after speaking with David Flair.

Q: There's one question I have to ask you before we go any further ...

A: Shoot. I'm ready and willing to talk about anything.

Q: Well, I'm a little uncomfortable about this, but that whole thing on *Nitro* ...

A: Yeah, c'mon, I can take it!

Q: Well, that thing with your father ...

A: You mean Vince?

Q: No. I mean your real father.

A: Vince Russo is my real father. Vince Russo is the only father I've ever had. He's the only father who ever cared about me. That other guy was an absentee whatever.

Q: Anyway, the whole thing with The New Blood burying Ric Flair's career, and the whole thing with the coffin. Didn't that make you feel a little weird?

A: Weird? Why?

Q: Well, because the whole idea of having a mock burial for your father ... it's just a little morbid.

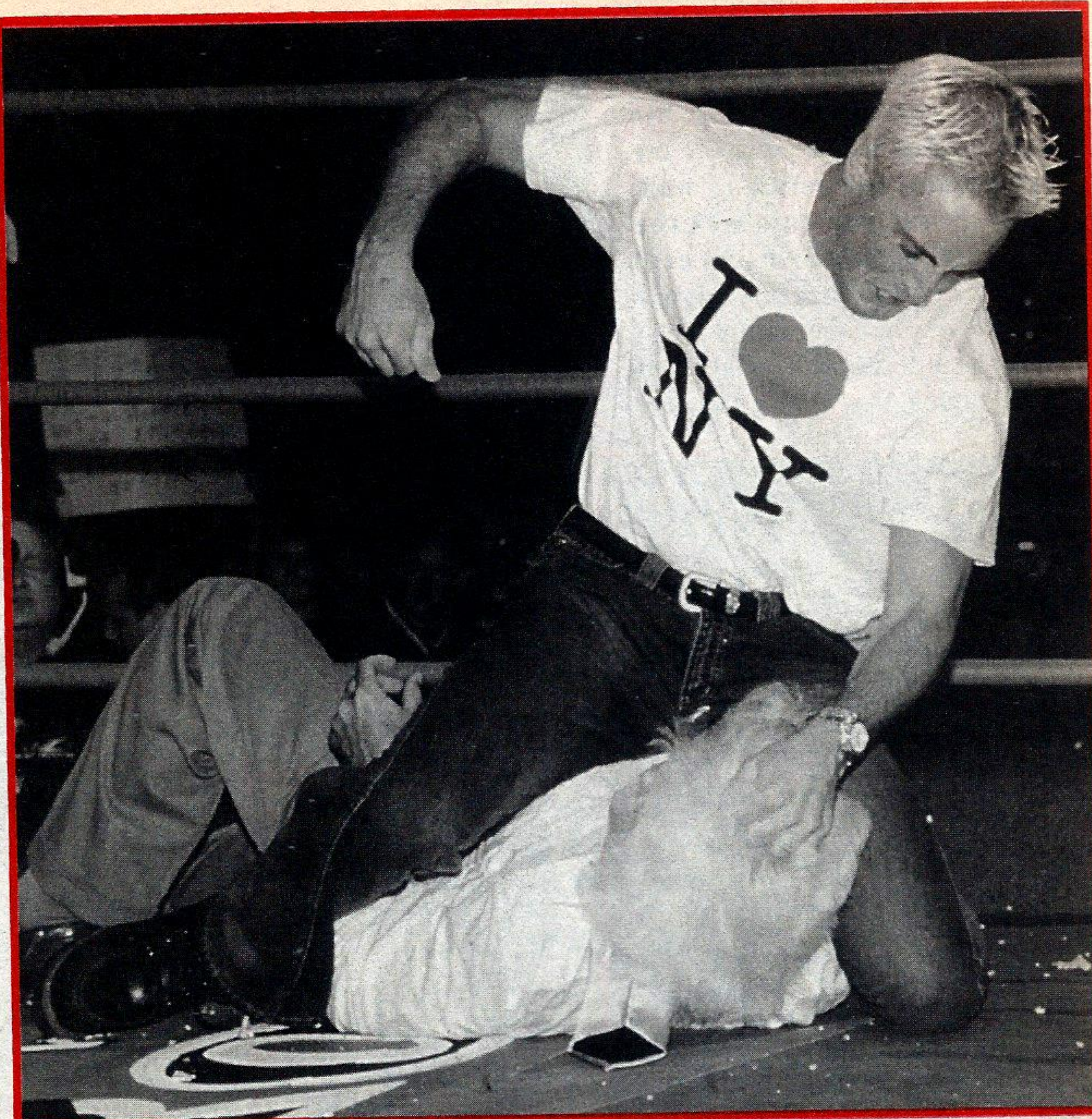
A: Maybe so, but I got an awesome Rolex watch out of it, and you know what that means?

Q: No, what does that mean?

A: That I'm bound to get a lot more out of him dead than I ever did when he was alive. I kind of liked the idea, seeing my father's coffin, knowing that from now on, I would be the only Flair anybody cared about.

Q: You know, I have this sneaking suspicion that you're all talk, that you really do care about your father.

A: Yeah? Well, I think your sneaking suspicion is wrong. I think I care about him about as much as he cared about



David Flair unleashes years upon years of pent-up anger by driving piston-like right hands to the head of his father, Ric. David, who now calls Vince Russo his father, is an emotional and psychological wreck.

me, which was not at all.

Q: I'm going to stick with this train of thought for a second. It looks to me as if you have a love-hate relationship with your father. I'm not going to sit here and claim that Ric was a great father, because you know better than anybody else does, and there's certainly no doubt that Ric was on the road a lot when you were growing up.

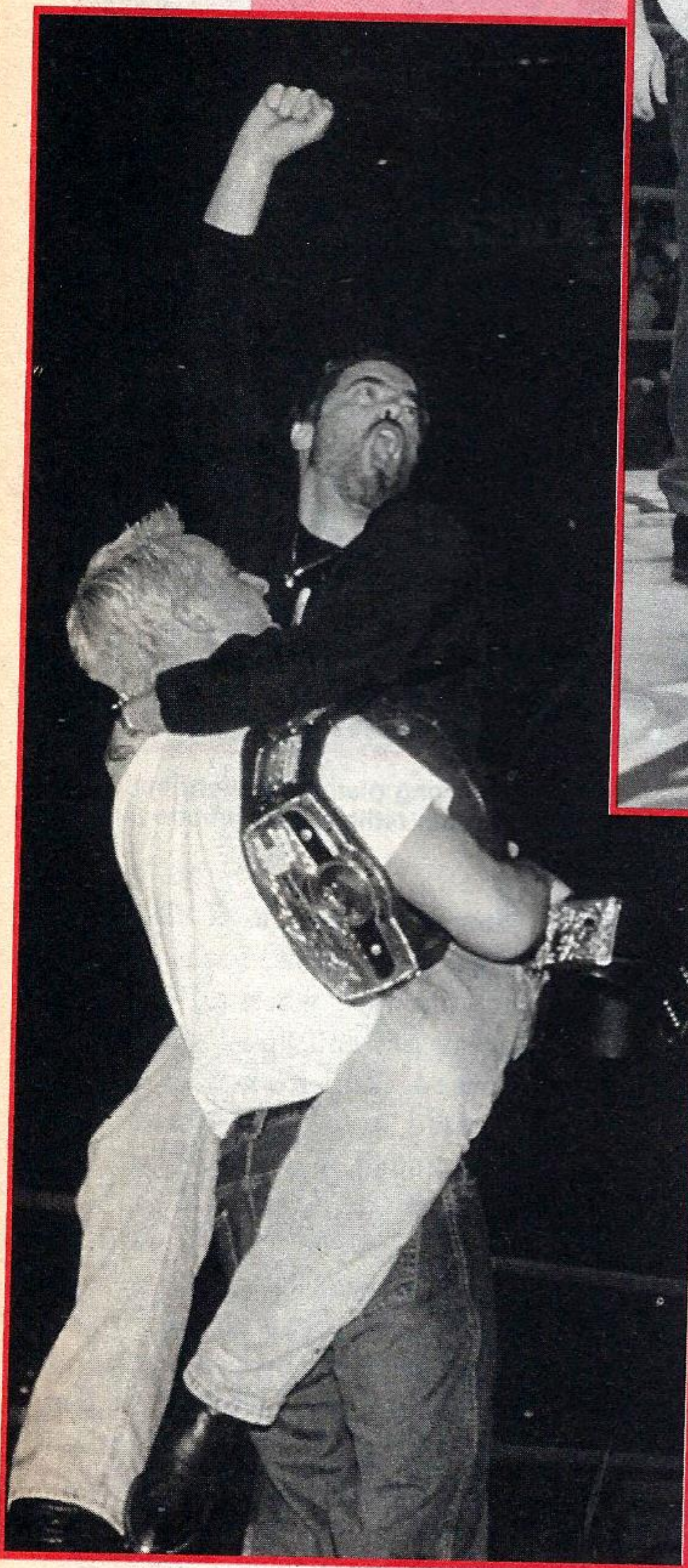
A: A lot? Try all the time! He only cared about world titles and keeping himself surrounded by as many beautiful women as possible.

Q: Point taken. But recently on *Thunder*, you, Crowbar, and Jeff Jarrett were wrestling Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, and Kevin Nash, when your father appeared to be having some kind of health prob-

lems in the ring, as if they were chest pains. Now, I was looking at your face when all this was going on, and you looked concerned. You looked as if you wanted to walk over and help your father, but something kept you from doing so.

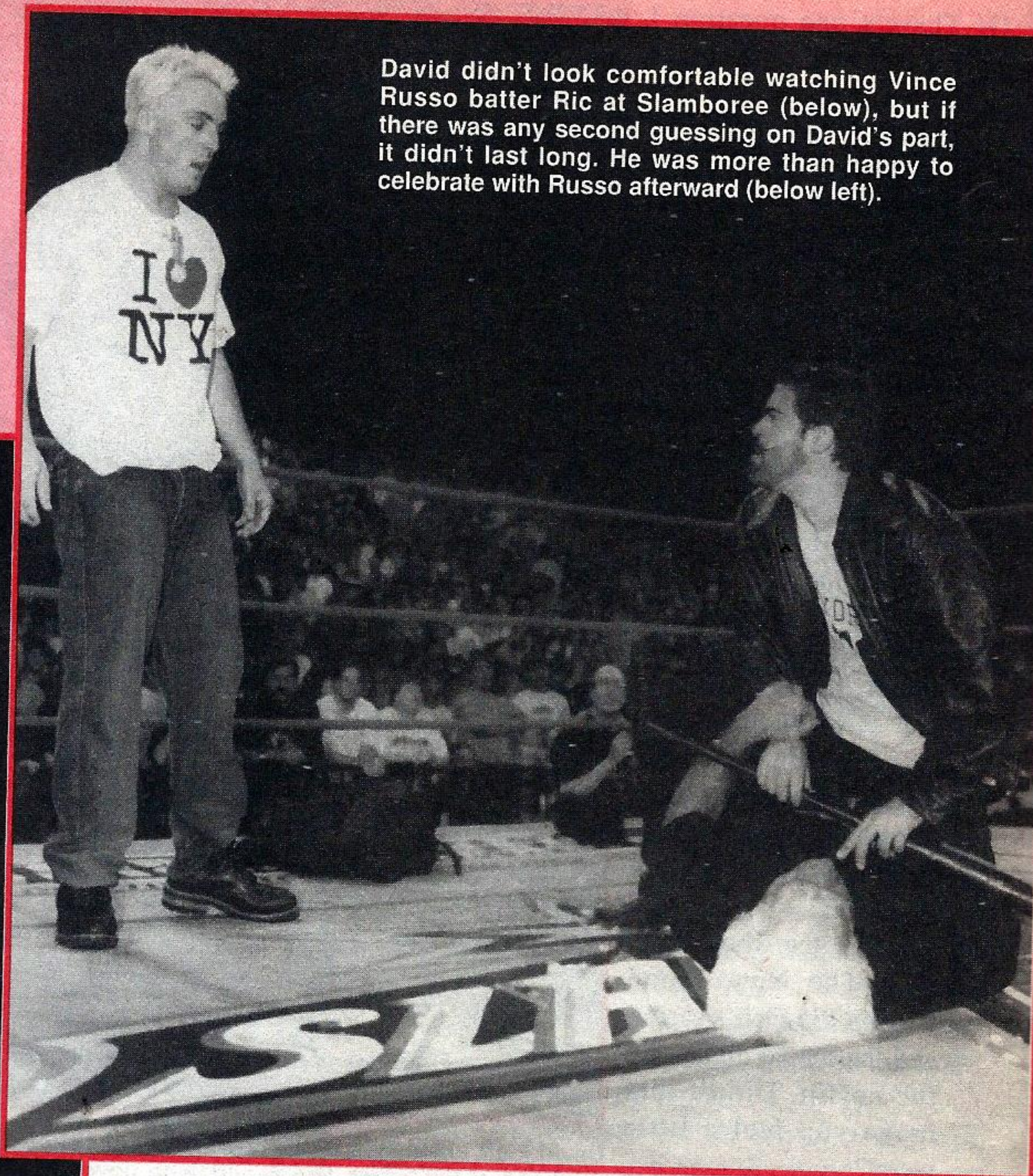
A: Yeah, and you know what that was? It was common sense. You say you're not going to sit there and tell me what kind of father Ric Flair was? Well, I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I never loved Ric Flair. It was never a question of whether I loved him. It was always a question of whether he loved me. That's all this ever came down to. So when you think you saw me concerned about Ric Flair, looking like I wanted to walk over and

help him, what you saw is a son's natural love for the man who's supposed to be his father. But when you saw me ignore him and refuse to walk over, what you saw was the product of me having to convince myself that my father would never care about me. I never said this was easy. I'm just saying that that's the way



it is. That's the way it's always going to be. And let me ask you a question: What kind of father signs up for a match against his own son?

Q: Let me ask you a question: What



David didn't look comfortable watching Vince Russo batter Ric at Slamboree (below), but if there was any second guessing on David's part, it didn't last long. He was more than happy to celebrate with Russo afterward (below left).

kind of son signs on for a match against his own father?

A: You know what your problem is, man? You just don't understand. You probably grew up with loving parents who cared about you and paid attention to you and took you to baseball games and never forgot about your birthdays and didn't make you sleep in the basement and cared about what was going on in your life. Am I right so far?

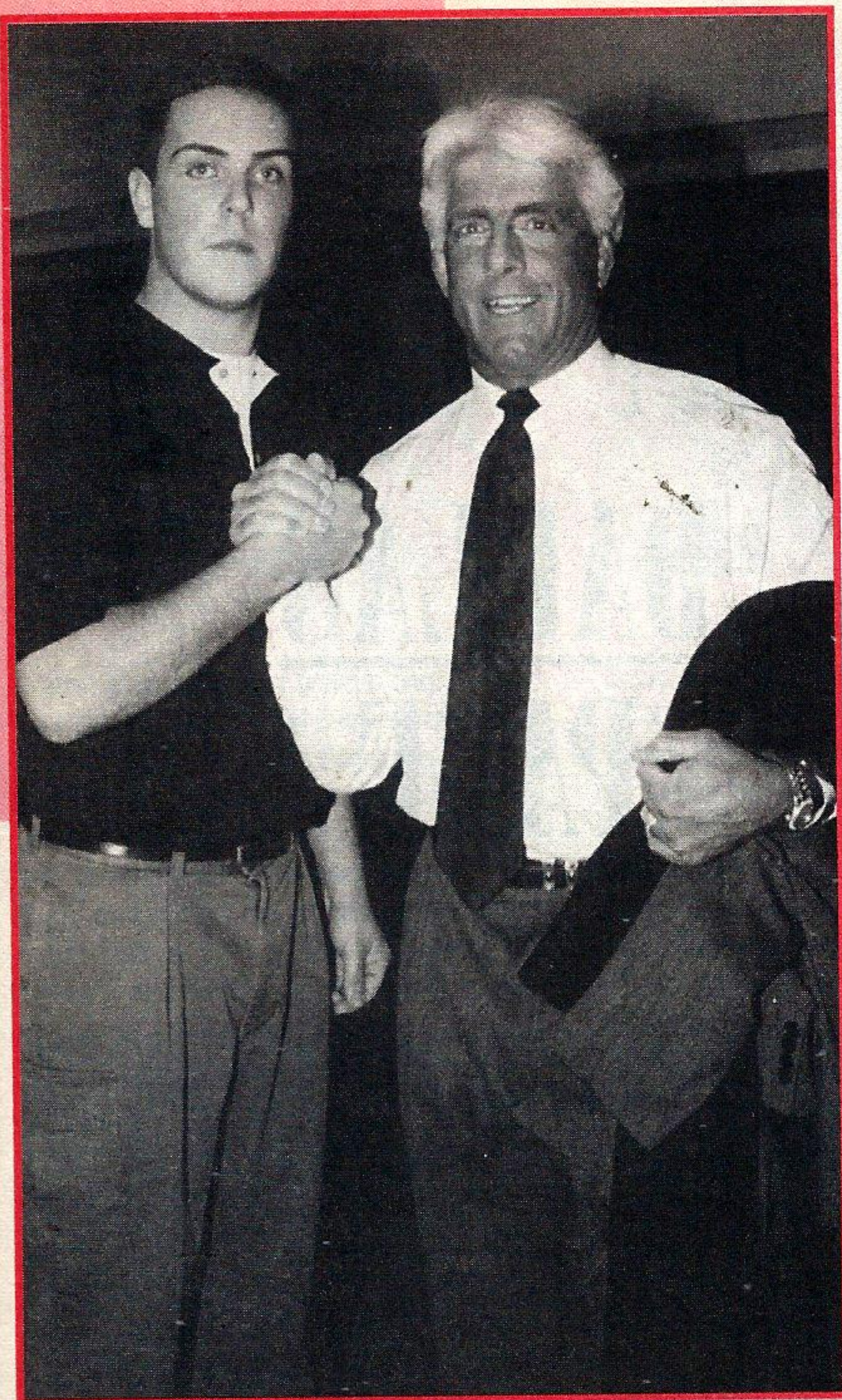
Q: Slow down, you're ...

A: Yeah, of course I'm right. You just don't understand that Ric Flair is no longer my father. He's Ric to me. Hell, he might as well be Mr. Flair. He's noth-

ing. He's just some wrestler who came home every once in a while and made like he cared about me. And now he's trying to make me out as the bad guy? Give me a break! You know, there's an old saying in this world: You reap what you sow. Ric Flair is reaping what he sowed. Public humiliation. The whole world is finding out exactly what kind of man he really is.

Q: Daffney doesn't have anything to do with this, does she?

A: I'm going to say one thing and one thing only: Daffney has *never* told me how to deal with Ric Flair, but when she saw how he treated me, she couldn't believe it. She knows what's right and what's wrong, and she could tell that this was wrong. I didn't have to ask her, and she didn't have to tell me.



The difference a year and a half can make. David (above left, posed with Ric in January 1999), was once a Gap advertiser's dream. Now, however, with his bleached blond hair and wild stare, only the oddly alluring Daffney has eyes for him (above right).

Q: Okay, now you're losing me, but let's get on with this. You seem to be angry at your stepmother, too. Is your stepmother really at fault here?

A: Hey, my stepmother didn't do anything, and that's the whole damn problem. She never sat down and said, "Ric, honey, you need to pay attention to David," or "Ric, honey, maybe it's not a good idea for David to sleep in the cold basement where there's no heat." She never did anything like that. He'd come home once every two months, and she'd just step aside and act as if he'd been there all along, letting him run the house. And there's

one more thing: She's just as much to blame as he is when it comes to how they treat the prize child.

Q: You're talking about your younger brother, Reid?

A: Who else? Of course I'm talking about "The Champ." That little snot-nosed brat, he took all the love my fath ... Ric had for me and stole it. All I heard about was how good Reid was doing in this tournament, how good he was doing in that tournament. Do we have room for another trophy? They never talked about me, Rosenbaum. They never talked about me.

Q: Just wondering: Have you and your parents ever considered

going for counseling?

A: Counseling? This family? The great Ric Flair go for counseling? What are you, out of your mind?

Q: Just a question, David.

A: Well, it just proves how much you don't understand and how much people will never understand. People think that just because Ric Flair's a great wrestler, he must be a great father. Well, one has nothing to do with the other—and I know that for a fact.

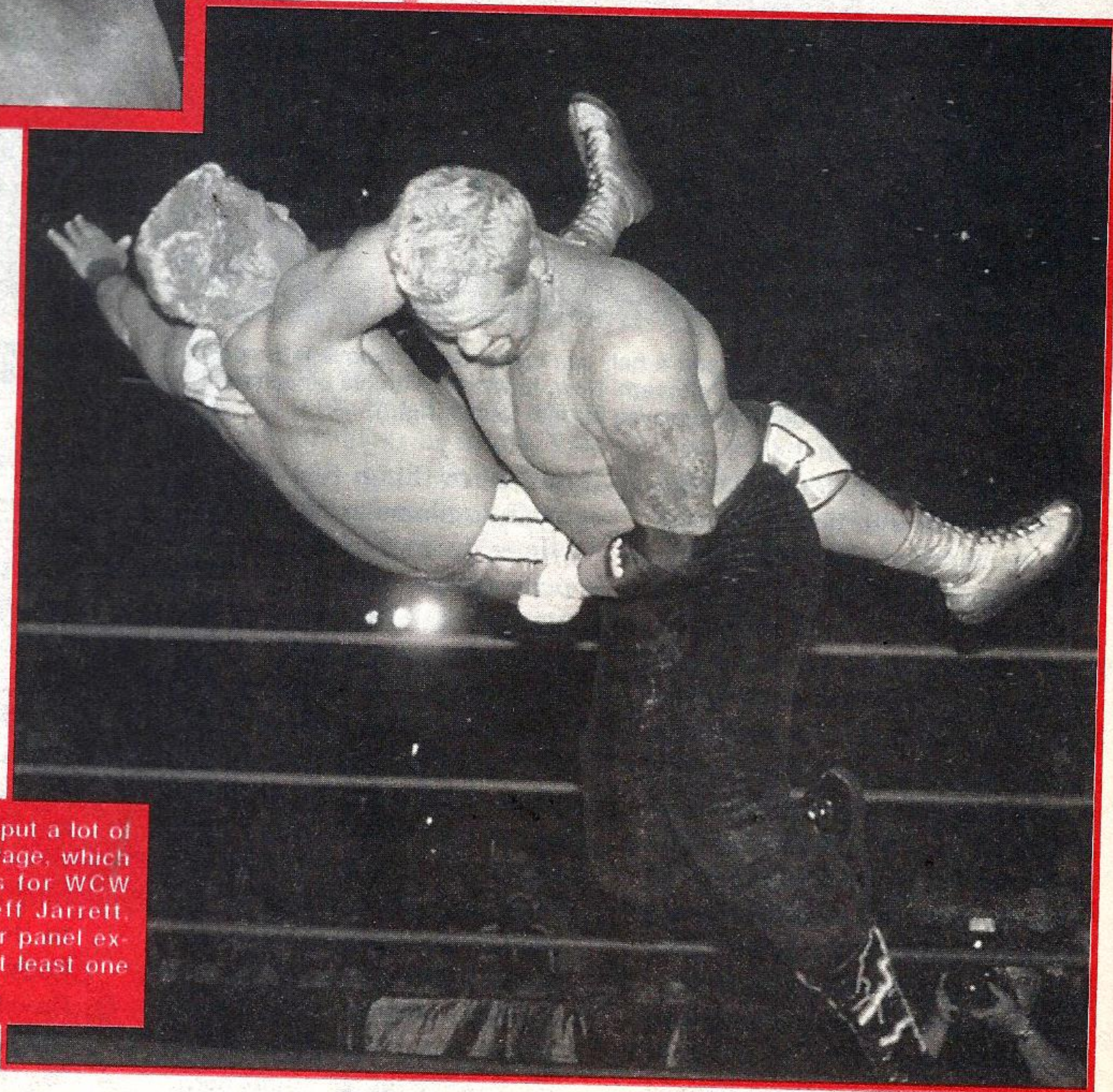
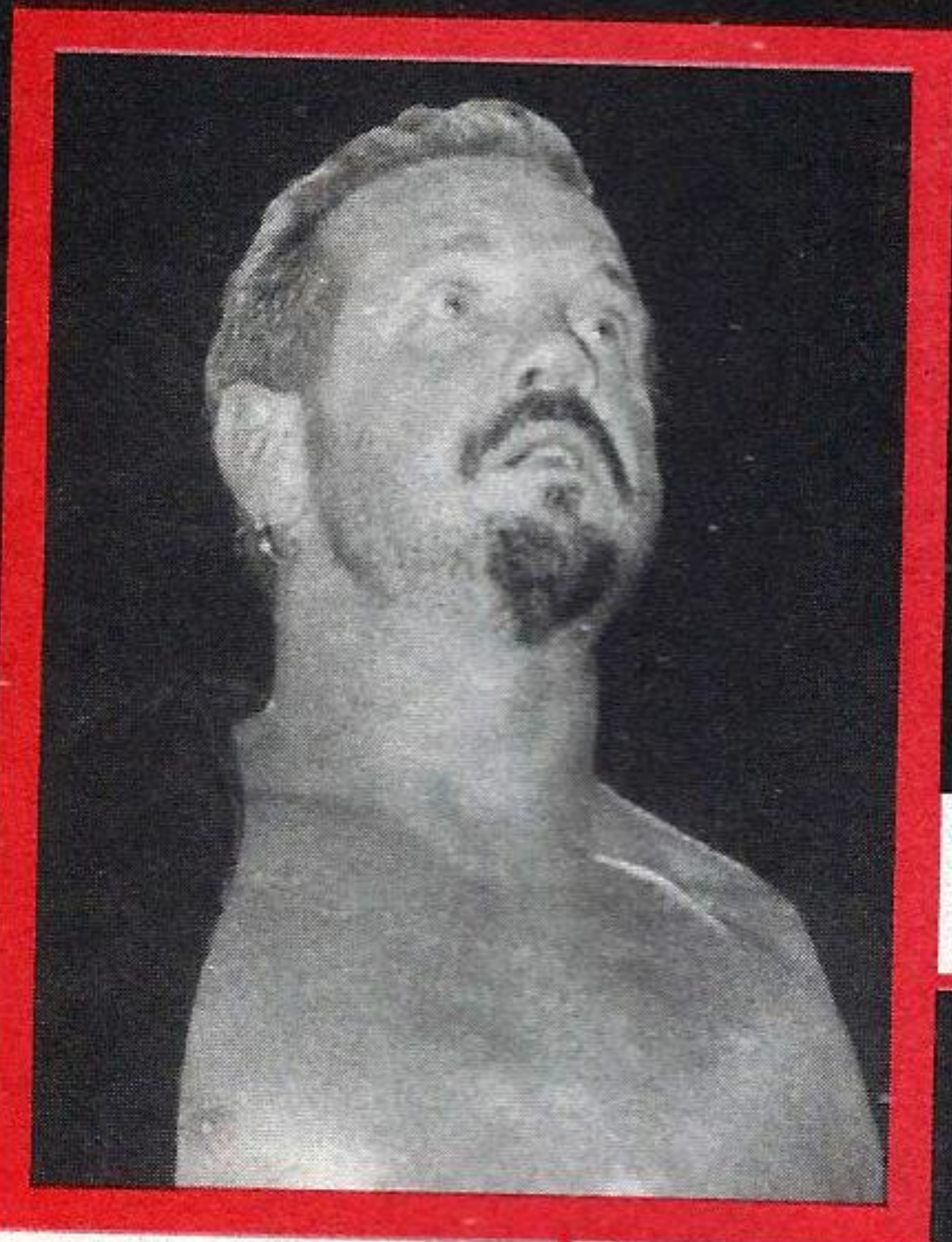
Q: David, thanks for your time, and I hope you get your life together.

A: My life is together. It's Ric Flair's life that's going to fall apart—what's left of it. □

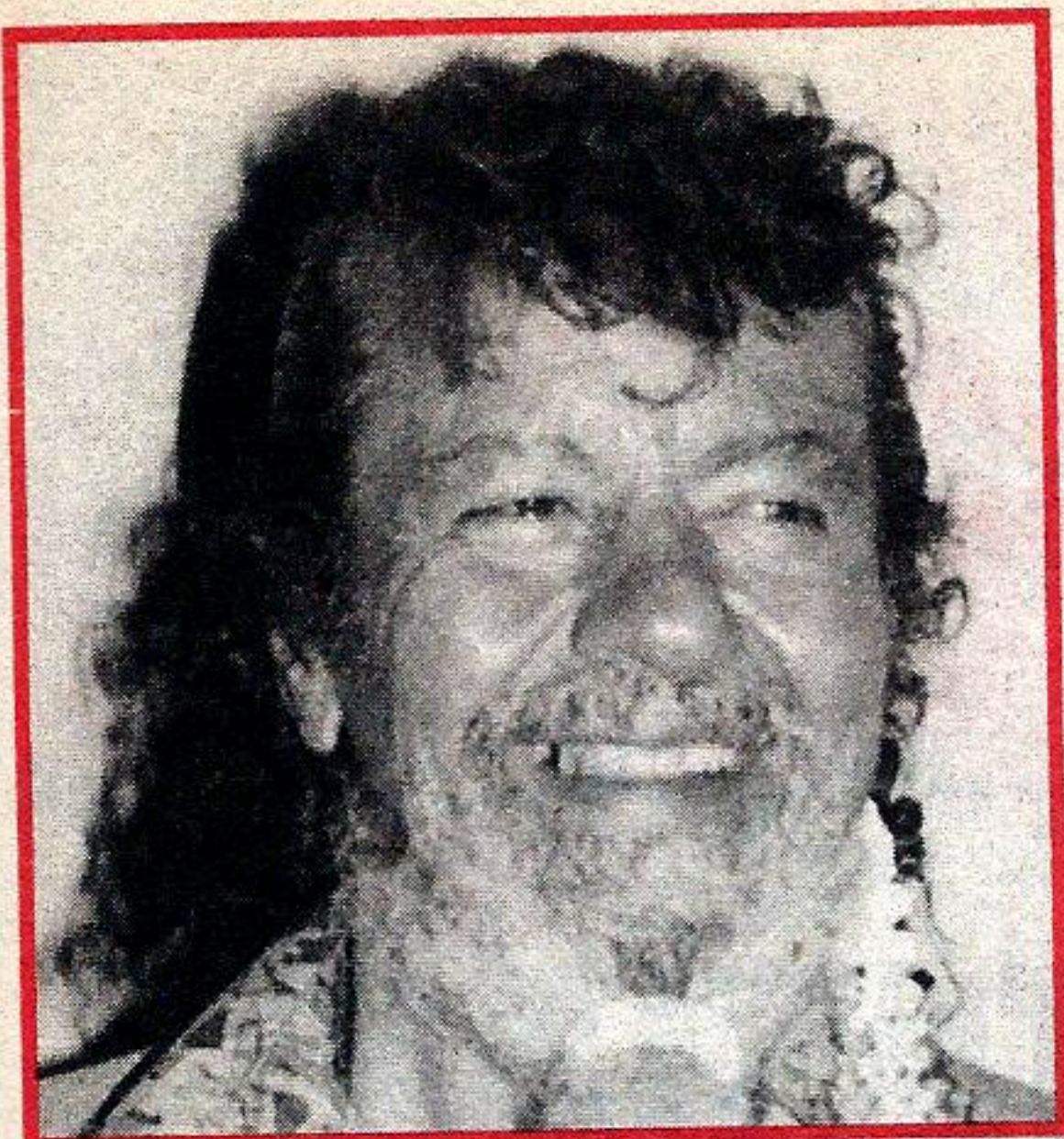
X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

DALLAS PAGE



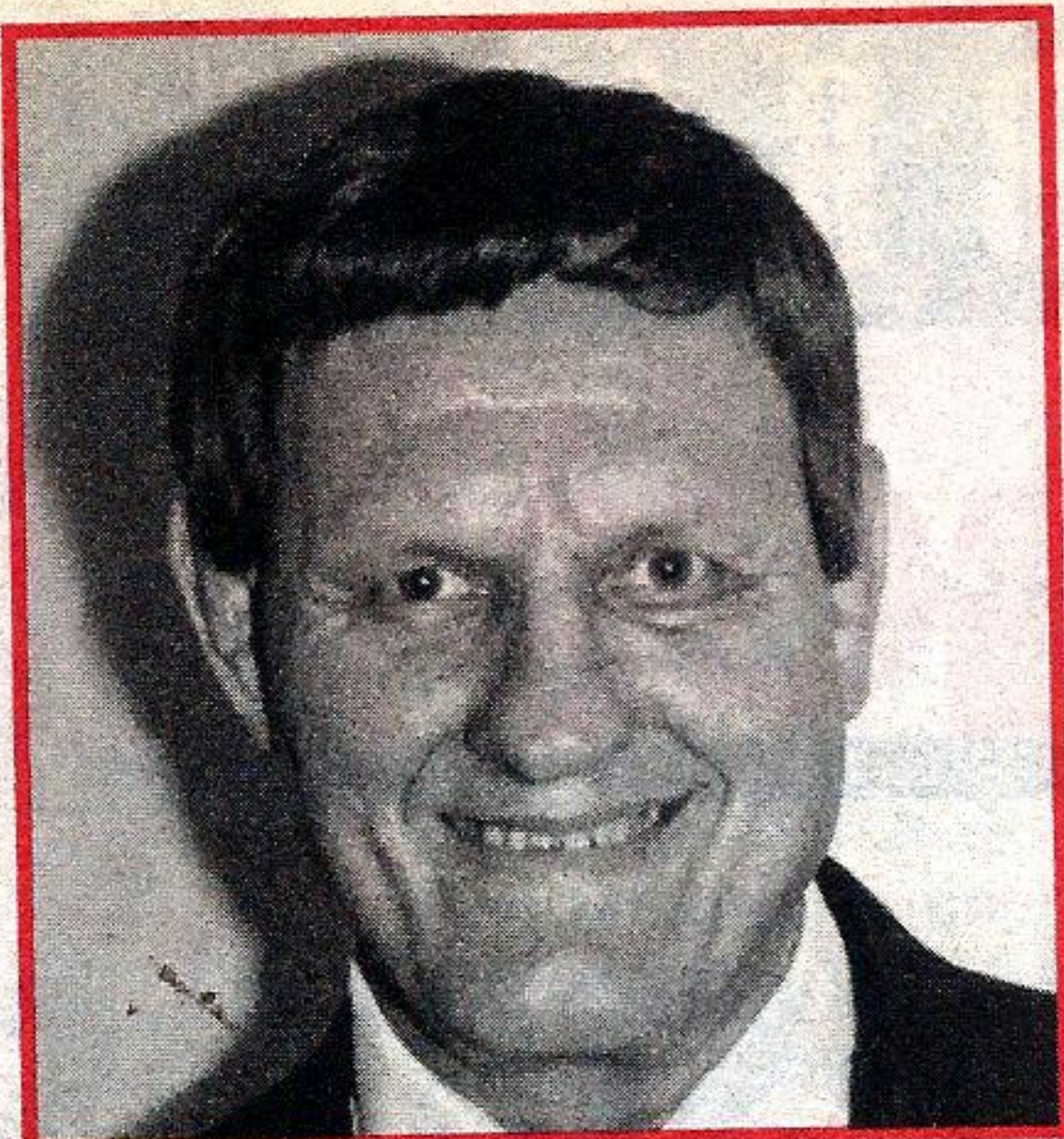
Personal turmoil has put a lot of pressure on Dallas Page, which can't be good news for WCW World champion Jeff Jarrett. Most members of our panel expect Page to make at least one more run for the strap.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"I don't know how a guy bounces back from losing a girl like Kimberly, but if anyone can find the way, it's 'Diamond' Dallas Page. This guy is all about survival. His whole career is about survival. That's why I'm sure Page will win the WCW belt at least one more time. He's been down just about as low as a wrestler can go, and he found a way to get back to the top. This whole thing with Kimberly and David Arquette is nothing but a speed bump for him, daddy."

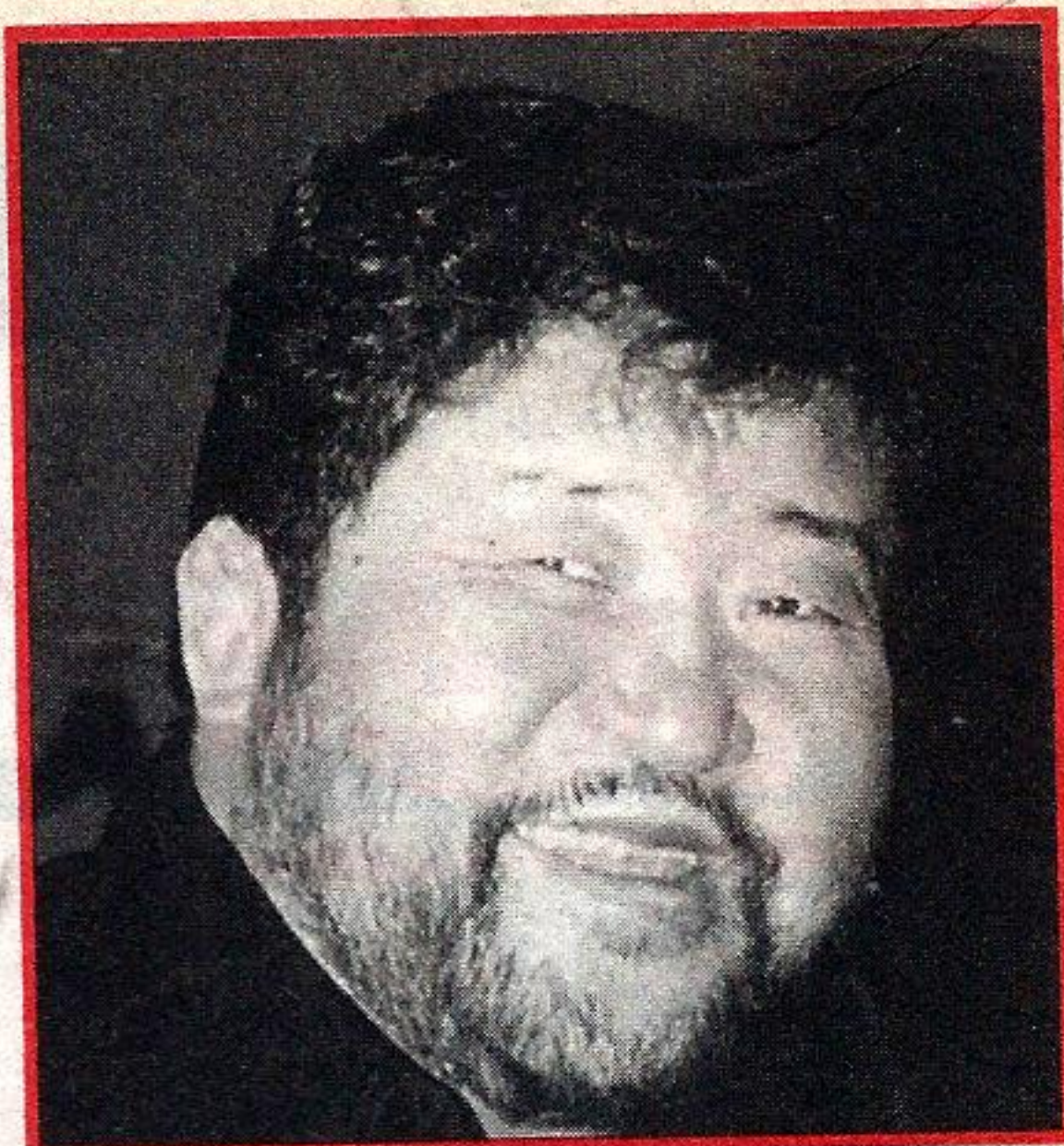
Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has managed 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"Dallas Page got what he deserved, if you ask me. How stupid can he be to get tricked by a scrawny little runt like David Arquette? Maybe that'll teach him to stop poking around Hollywood for tag team partners. After all the years he's spent in the business, he should know better than to trust an unproven newcomer like Arquette. Maybe that broad has him all flustered. I keep telling people that broads and wrestling don't mix. Neither do Hollywood and wrestling."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts.



MASSA SAITO

"Say what you like about Dallas Page, but he has come very far by virtue of his toughness and determination. He is like many American wrestlers who have not been endowed with tremendous physical talent, but because of their attitude and desire, have accomplished great things in the ring. There are few wrestlers in WCW or anywhere else with as much character and integrity as 'Diamond' Dallas Page. I expect him to win many more WCW titles during his career."

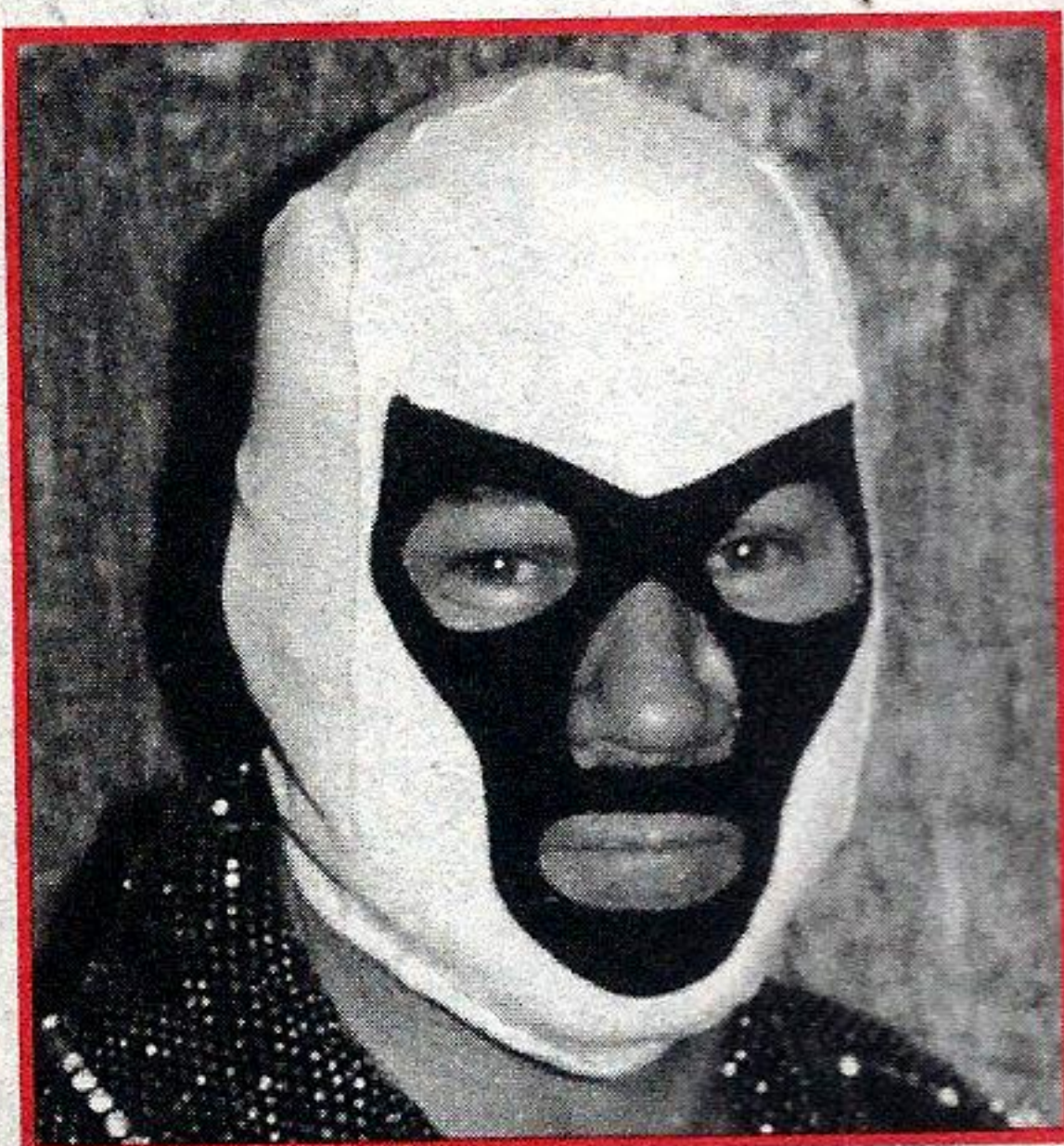
Massa Saito, a former AWA World heavyweight and WWF tag team champion, retired last year after a 24-year career.



FABULOUS MOOLAH

"It's been a tough year for Dallas Page, that's for sure. First he hurts his back, then he loses Kimberly to Eric Bischoff. Then, to make things worse, he gets double-crossed by some AT&T salesman and ends up losing the WCW World title. I can't see how things can get much worse for him. Somehow, Page needs to forget about all of this and focus on wrestling. He can find another wife, and that David Arquette is good for nothing, but Page only has one career."

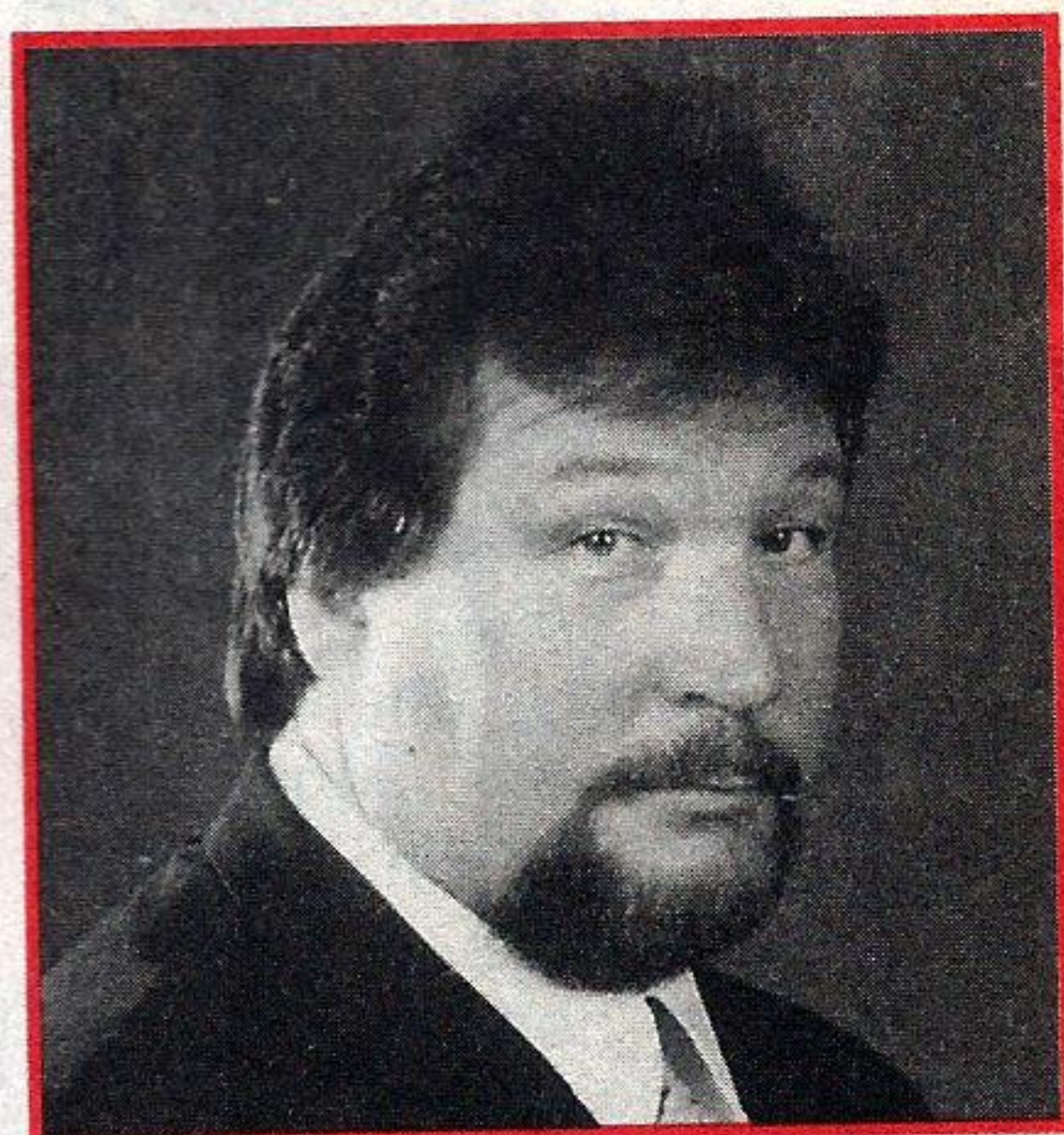
Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She is now a trainer and part-time competitor.



MR. WRESTLING II

"With all the distractions going on in his personal and professional life, it's pretty easy to overlook the fact that DDP is still a great competitor. He's tough as nails, and no one has found a good counter to that Diamond cutter of his—even after all these years. If you look at who's worn the title in WCW over the past five years, I think you'd agree that Page just may be the best of them all. I think he has at least one more good run left in him."

Mr. Wrestling II, one of wrestling's most popular and accomplished stars, held many regional tag team and singles titles throughout the South.



TED DiBIASE

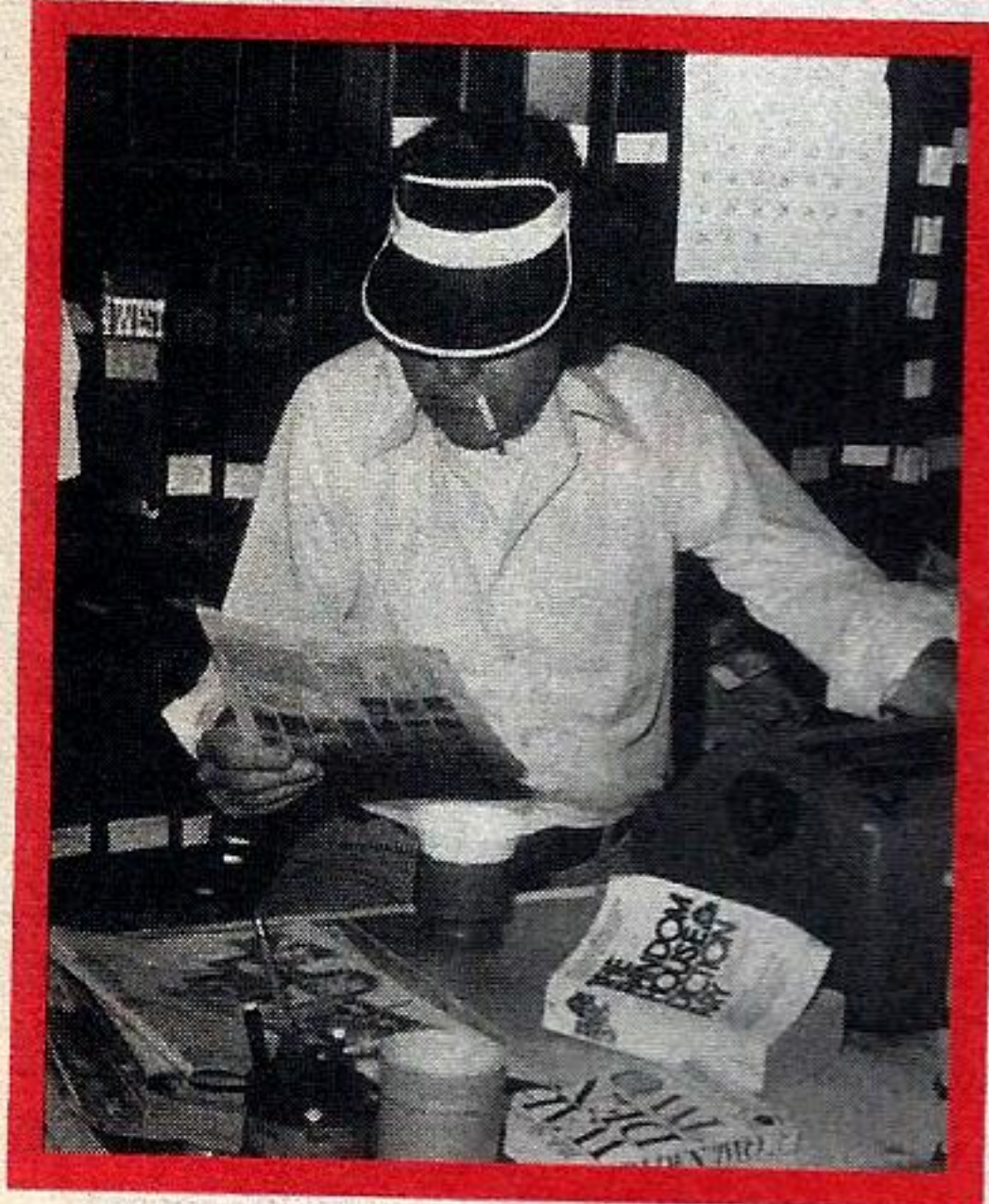
"When you start to talk about tough people, Dallas Page's name should be at the top of everyone's list. Here is a guy who came back from a serious back injury to win the WCW World title. And he does so much for the company by getting mainstream coverage. The most remarkable thing about Page, though, is his ability to remain positive no matter what. That ability is being tested right now, but I think Page will end up like he always does: a winner."

Ted DiBiase, a three-time WWF World tag team champion and one of the sport's most accomplished managers, is now retired from the sport.

MATT BROCK

Remember

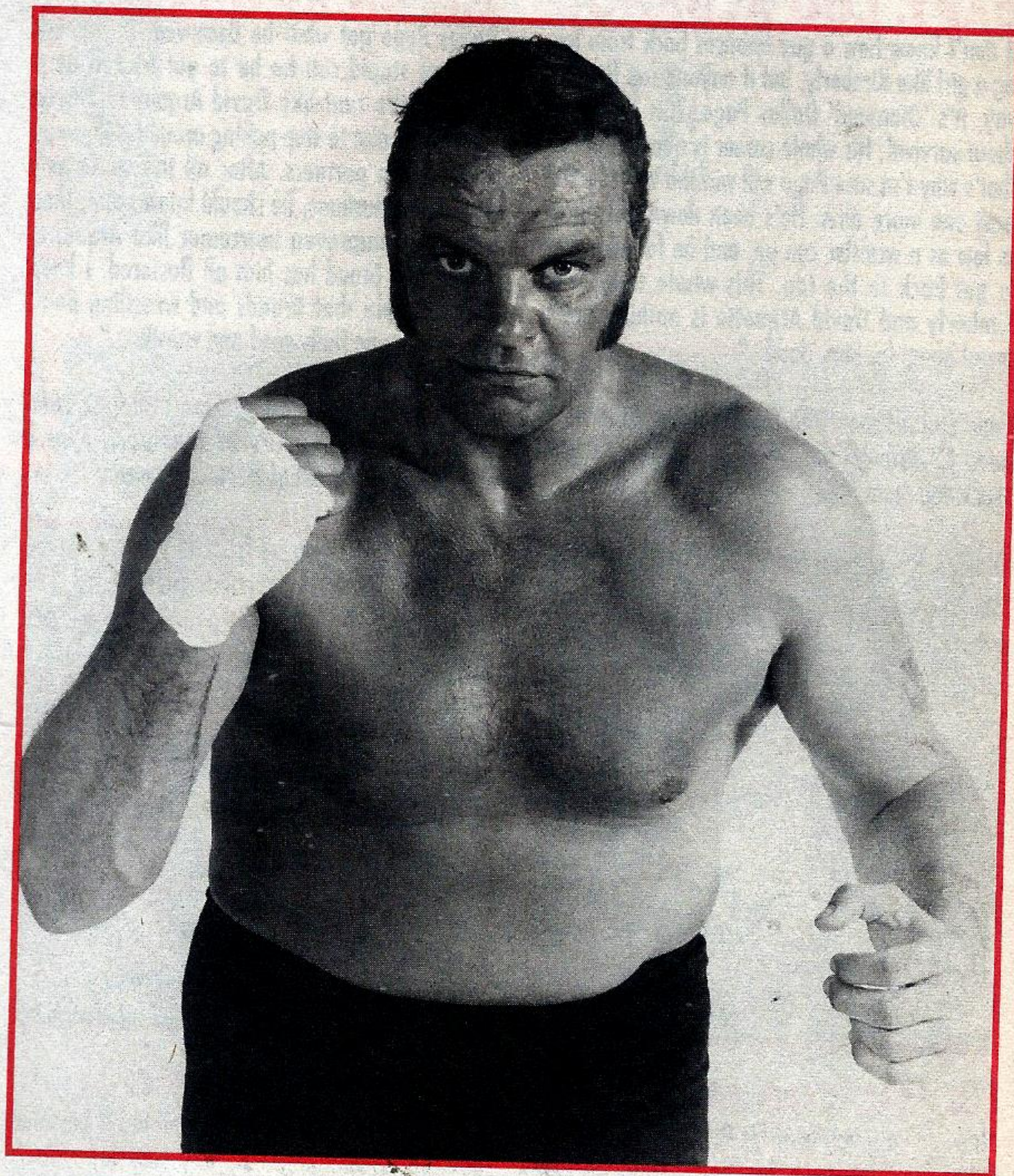
STAN STASIAK



WHEN YOU'RE GOING over the list of the best bad guys in wrestling history, one name that's easy to forget—but shouldn't be—is Stan Stasiak. In fact, you take away a nine-day WWF World heavyweight title reign by Stasiak in the early-'70s and there's a good chance the record books would've wiped out all mention of Stasiak by now.

Maybe the only ones who will never forget Stasiak are the fortunate ones who saw him wrestle and the unfortunate ones who were the victims of his heart punch. Talk about devastating. I've heard announcers going ga-ga these days over The Rock's Rock bottom and The Undertaker's tombstone piledriver, but when it comes to dangerous finishers, they've never come any more dangerous than Stasiak's heart punch.

Stasiak's finisher packed a wallop, and if he hit it just right—or just wrong, as far as his opponent was concerned—he could put an opponent in serious danger of losing his life. Not that he ever had any desire to kill his opponents.

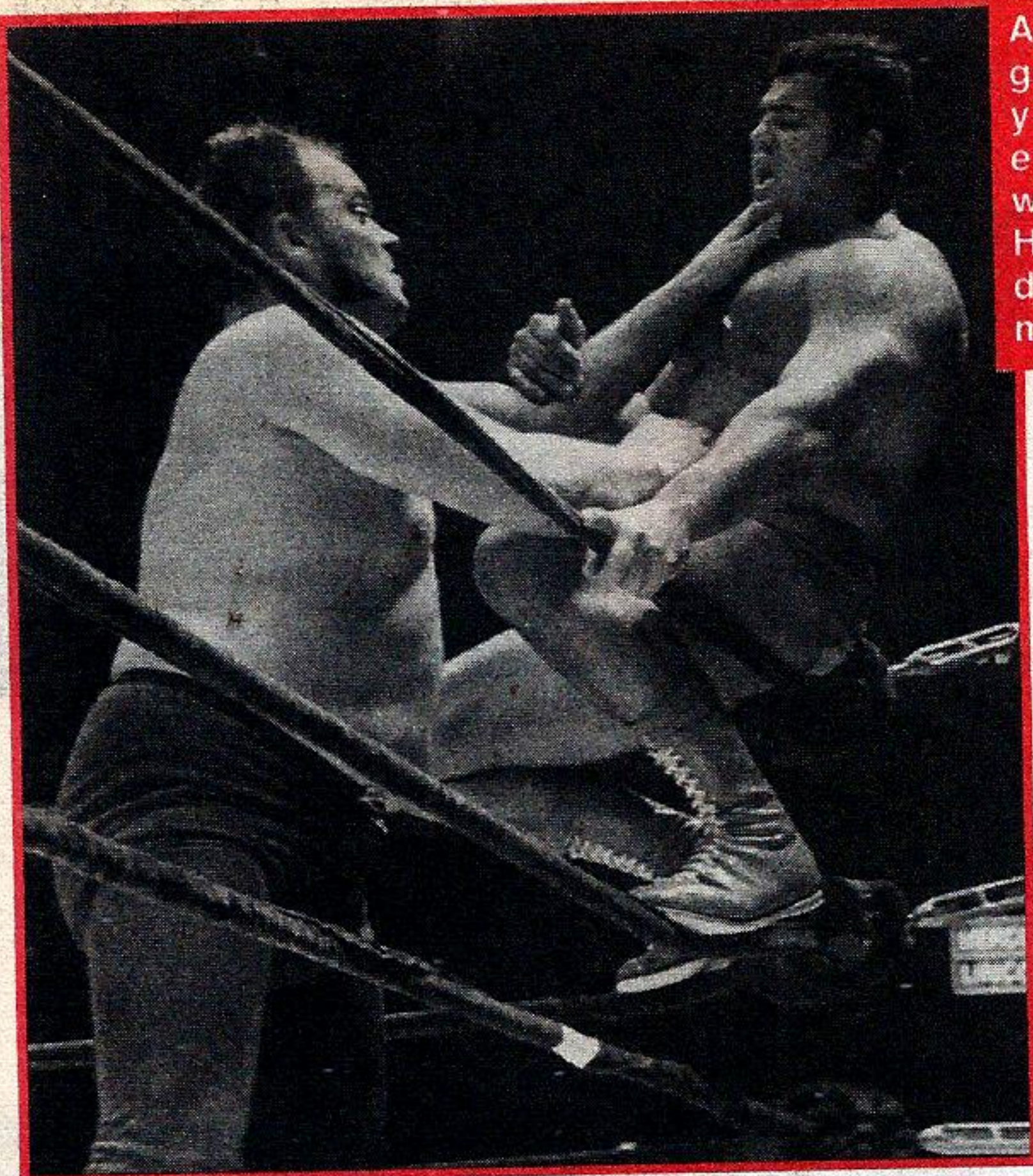


"Never," Stasiak told me a few dozen years ago after a match at Madison Square Garden. "The whole idea was to stop them, to put a scare into them, which is exactly what it did every time. I don't know all the medical terminology behind it, but I know that if I connect in the right spot with the right amount of force, I can make the heart stop for

just a second."

Fortunately for everyone involved, opponents' hearts always started right back up, and by the time they knew what had happened, they had already been pinned by Stasiak. A lot of men were afraid to step into the ring with Stasiak, and now you know the reason.

Like I said, Stasiak was a weird



Although Pedro Morales got the best of their two-year feud, Stan Stasiak eventually beat Pedro to win the WWWF World title. He lost the belt just nine days later to Bruno Sammartino.

The thing was, though, that Stasiak had always given Morales problems. Any time Morales walked out of the ring with that belt after beating Stasiak, he always knew he had been in a war, and he always had the bruises to prove it the next morning. This one night, Stasiak was sitting in the dressing

kind of rulebreaker. Not really cocky in the same way his son, Shawn, who's now part of that New Blood group in WCW, tends to be. Stan didn't say a heckuva lot; he just intimidated people with his stare, and that was enough to put the fans against him. He was a quiet, ruthless warrior who for about five or six years was a top-of-the-card rulebreaker on just about every card he wrestled.

But just to give you an idea of how much Stasiak got around, only two years before he won the WWWF World heavyweight title, Stasiak was Pacific Northwest champion (1971). For a while there, Stasiak seemed destined to always come close, but never win the really big one.

Then came 1973. Pedro Morales had been WWWF World champion for nearly three years after winning the belt from Ivan Koloff, and of the many challengers he had beaten many times, one was Stasiak. Stasiak had never beaten Morales as far as I could remember, and you'd have to say that by the time Morales walked into the ring for his title defense against Stasiak on December 1, 1973, at the Philadelphia Civic Center, Morales was feeling pretty good about his chances of winning again.

room in Philadelphia before the match when I walked over and asked him how he was feeling about going up against Morales again.

"Same as always, Brock," Stasiak said. "Only so many times that Morales can ram his head into a wall and not get hurt. I have a pretty good feeling about this one."

Stasiak always had a pretty good feeling about his matches, but this time he was right. Stasiak came out strong, like he always did, and battered Morales with kicks and punches. The World champion was at a severe disadvantage when all of a sudden, he mounted a comeback and got Stasiak off his feet. Morales rolled up Stasiak for the pin and got a two-count, but Stasiak lifted his shoulder just before three. The thing was, Morales still had his shoulders on the mat—one of those double-pin situations—and the referee counted three on him. Suddenly, Stasiak was WWWF World champion.

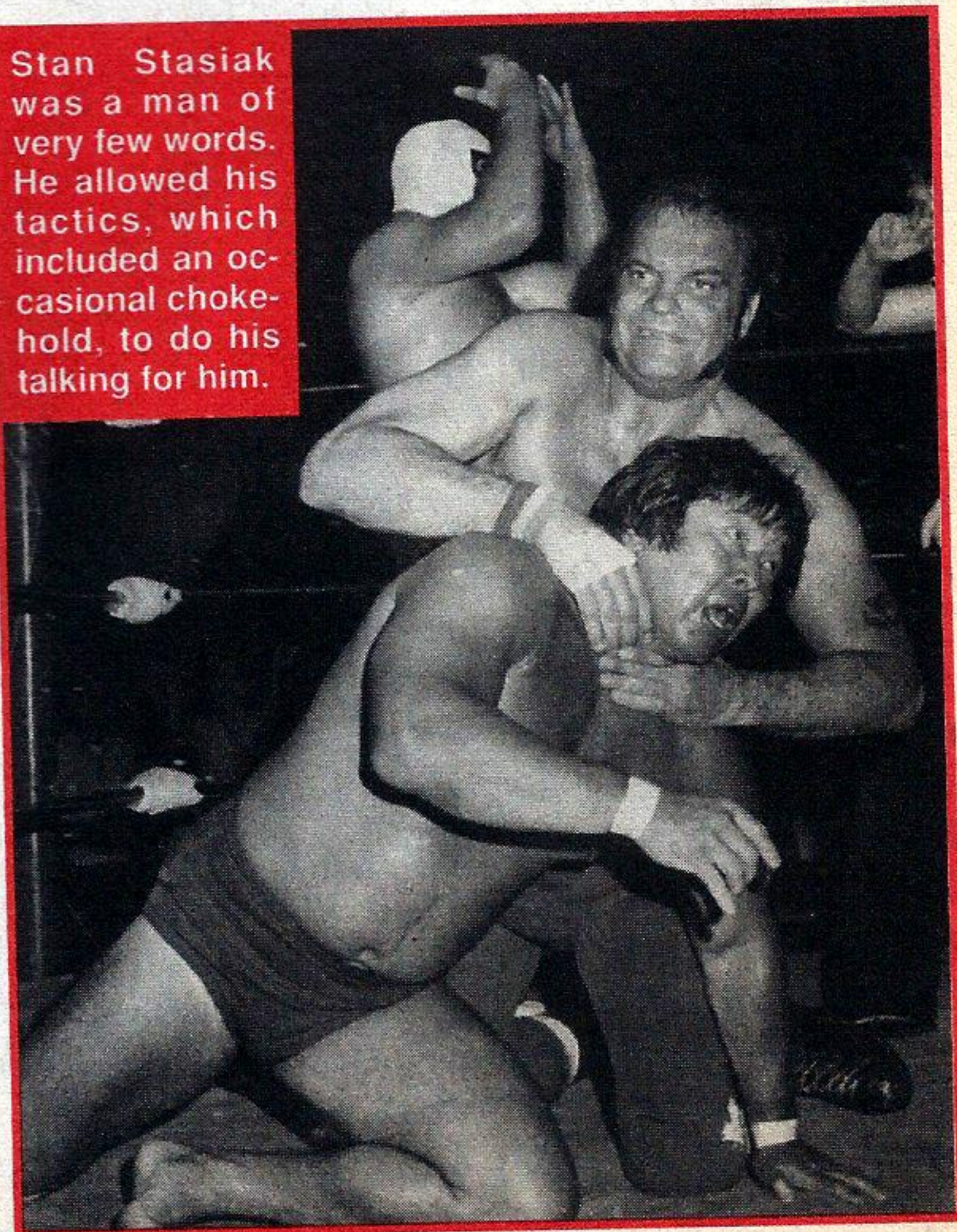
A lot of us in the

press seats couldn't believe it at first. Stasiak had come up short so many times that it was hard to believe he hadn't fallen just short once again. Even Stasiak didn't realize what had happened until the referee raised his arm and gave him the belt. Later on, Stasiak was boasting to the press about how he had beaten Morales for the belt, but after almost everybody had walked away, he said, "Being WWWF World champion is something they can never take away from me. My name will always be in the record books."

Stasiak ended up being a real piece of history, because nine days later he lost the title to Bruno Sammartino in New York, and Sammartino would go on to hold the title for another 3½ years. That means Stan Stasiak was the bridge between a long title reign by Morales and another long one by Sammartino.

Stan died of heart failure three years ago, and even though he won't be remembered as one of the WWF's all-time great champions, he'll always have the same space in the record books as Pedro and Bruno. That's something of which Stasiak could always be proud. □

Stan Stasiak was a man of very few words. He allowed his tactics, which included an occasional chokehold, to do his talking for him.



Spot Light N...

JUSTIN CREDIBLE

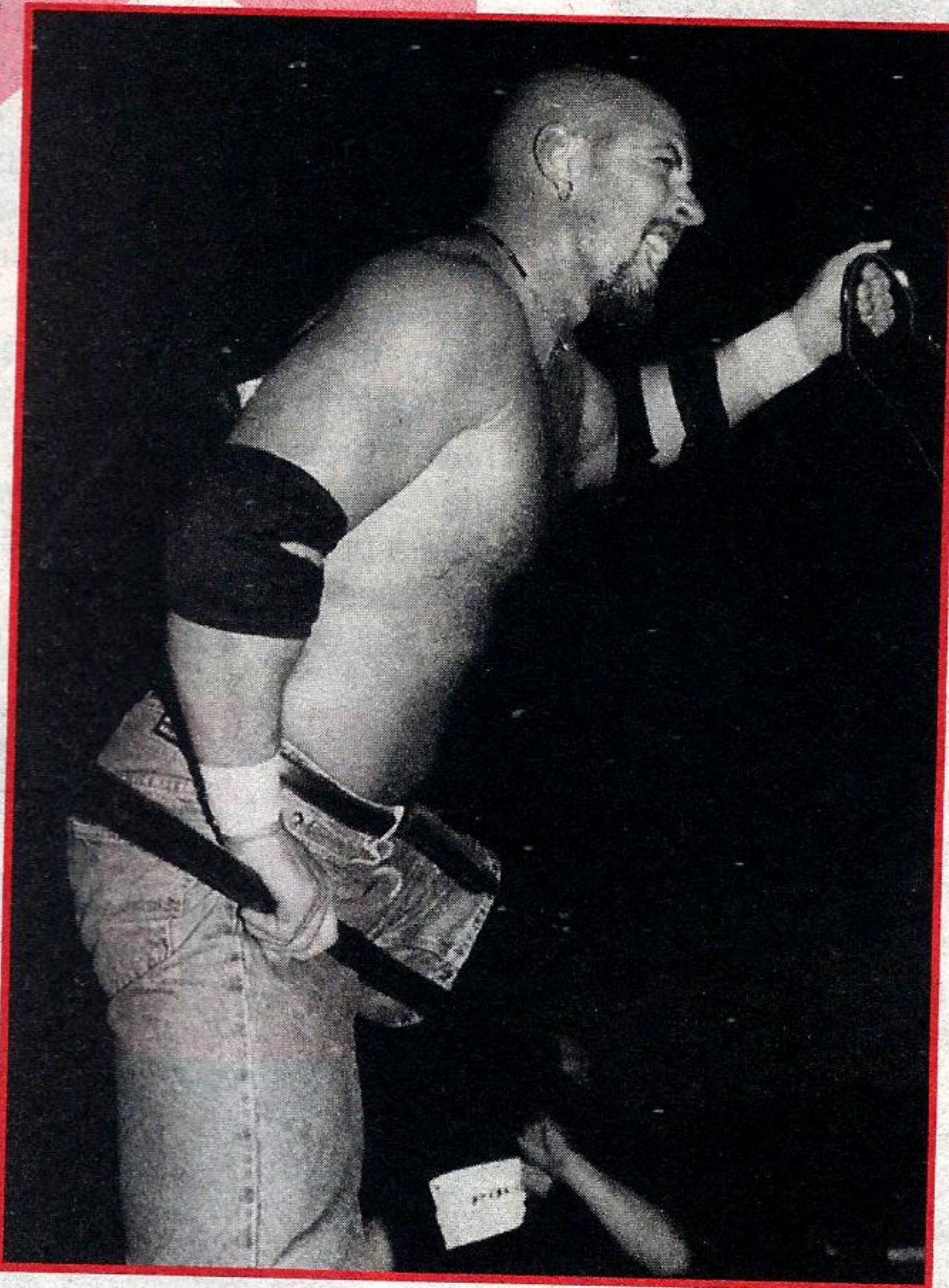
ALTHOUGH HE'S hardly a fan favorite, Justin Credible's resilience is admired by even his harshest critics. Patience and tenacity enabled him to overcome an undistinguished start in the sport to become a world champion.

Not long after training at the Hart Brothers' Wrestling Camp in Calgary, Credible made his WWF debut on March 1, 1993, as P.J. Walker in a loss to Lex Luger on *Monday Night Raw*. More losses followed, but on September 13, with Razor Ramon distracting Irwin R. Schyster (Mike Rotundo), Walker schoolboyed the tax man for the upset win.

Success didn't last for Walker, however, so Justin adopted the Aldo Montoya "Portuguese Man O' War" gimmick in the fall of 1994.

His record improved, but not enough to elevate him above mid-card status. Frustrated, he eventually left the WWF, and after a brief stop in the USWA, he made his ECW debut on September 20, 1997.

Credible shocked everyone in ECW with his talent and attitude. He scored several victories over Japanese superstar The Great Sasuke,



but also deliberately broke Mikey Whipwreck's leg and rudely interrupted a 10-bell salute to Tommy Dreamer's recently deceased grandfather at the ECW Arena. Justin was climbing the ECW ratings, but he was making a lot of enemies along the way.

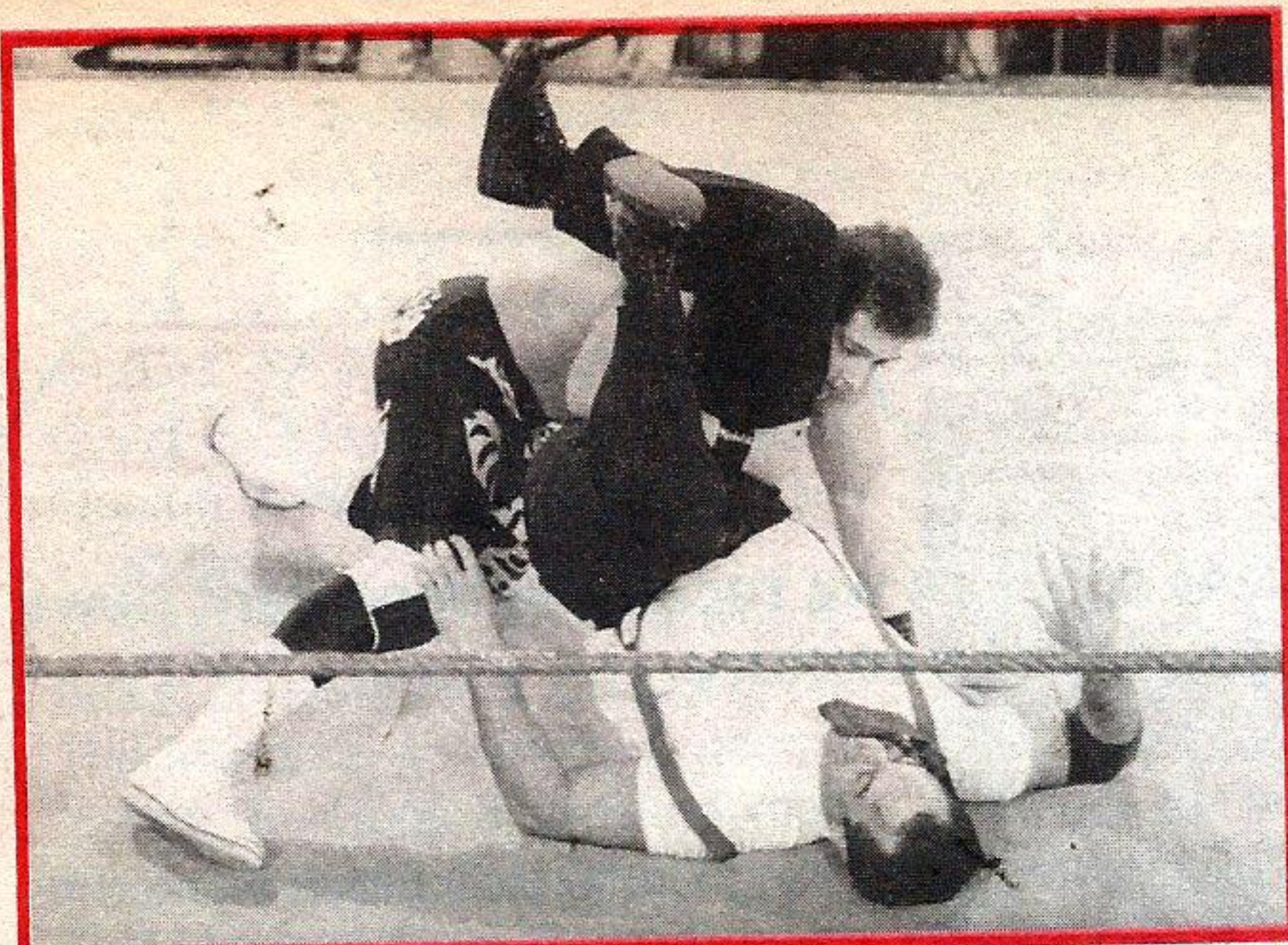
Despite his rancorous disposition, Credible continued to impress. He

racked up victories over hardcore icons such as Dreamer, The Sandman, and Shane Douglas, but his cockiness grew with each new conquest, and he wrongfully took credit for "driving Sandman and Douglas out of ECW."

He infuriated fans even further when he had Sabu banned from active competition in the summer of '99 for wrestling in non-sanctioned bouts. Despite the ban, Sabu managed to appear at several ECW shows and defeat Credible in impromptu matches. Yet Credible won their "legal" match at Anarchy Rulz '99 after nailing Sabu with his "That's Incredible" piledriver.

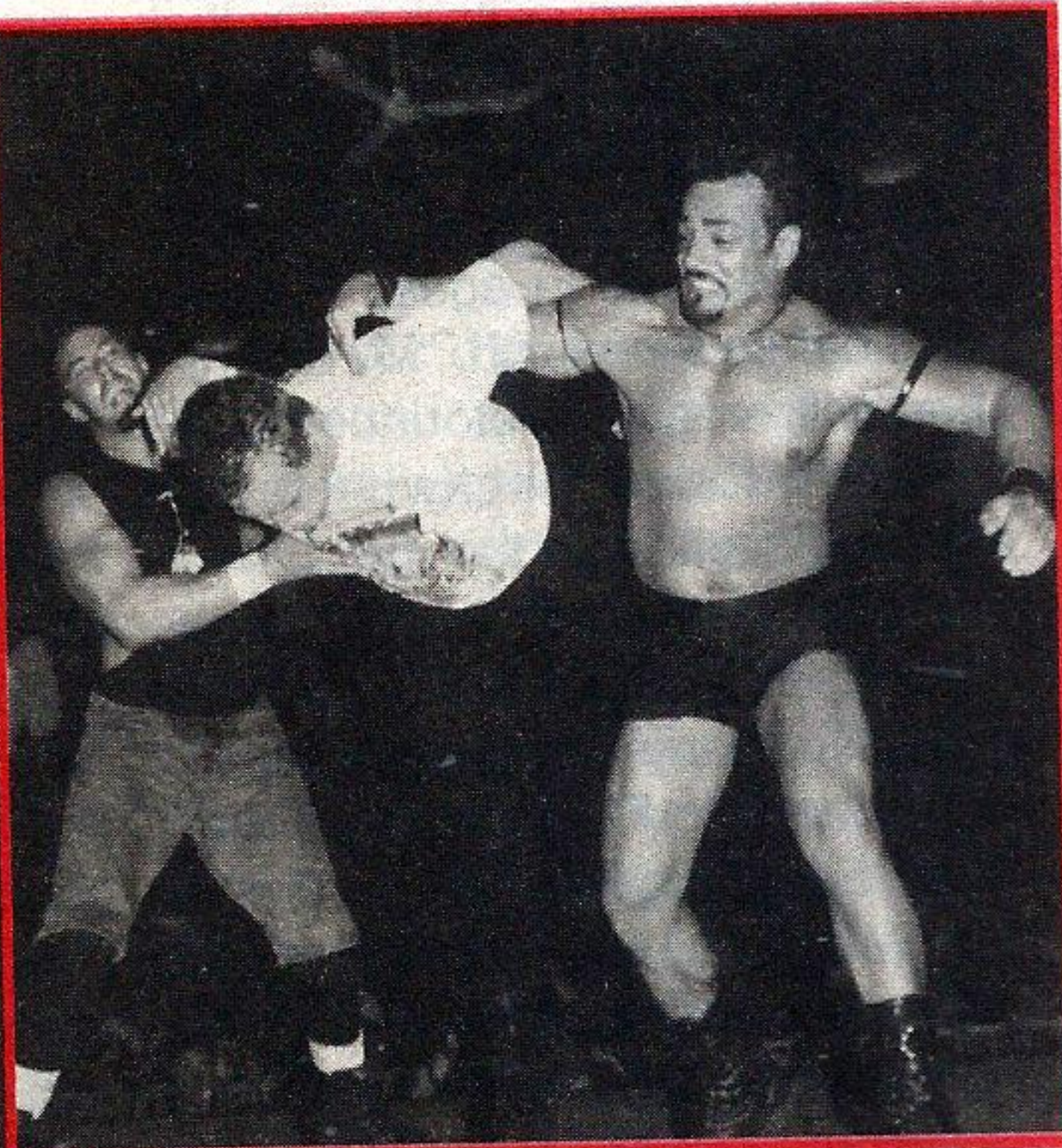
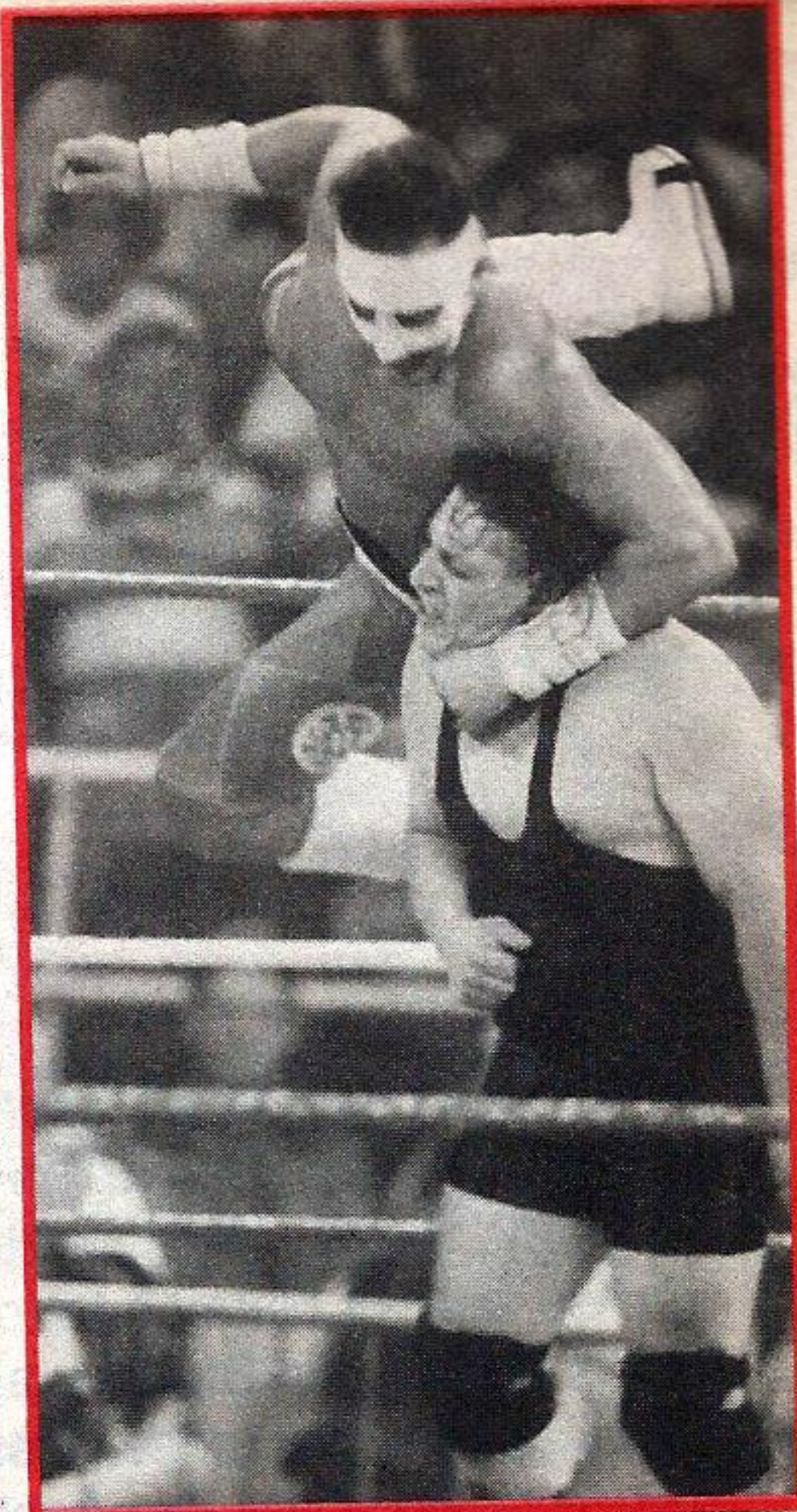
Justin is a two-time ECW World tag team champion as well, having captured the gold both times with Lance Storm. But at "Cyberslam 2000," he abandoned his half of the tag title to challenge then-champ Tommy Dreamer for the World belt, which he went on to win after some timely interference by Francine.

Like him or not, Justin Credible's rise to the top of the sport has been no less than that. Therefore, we celebrate his achievements in this month's "Spotlight."

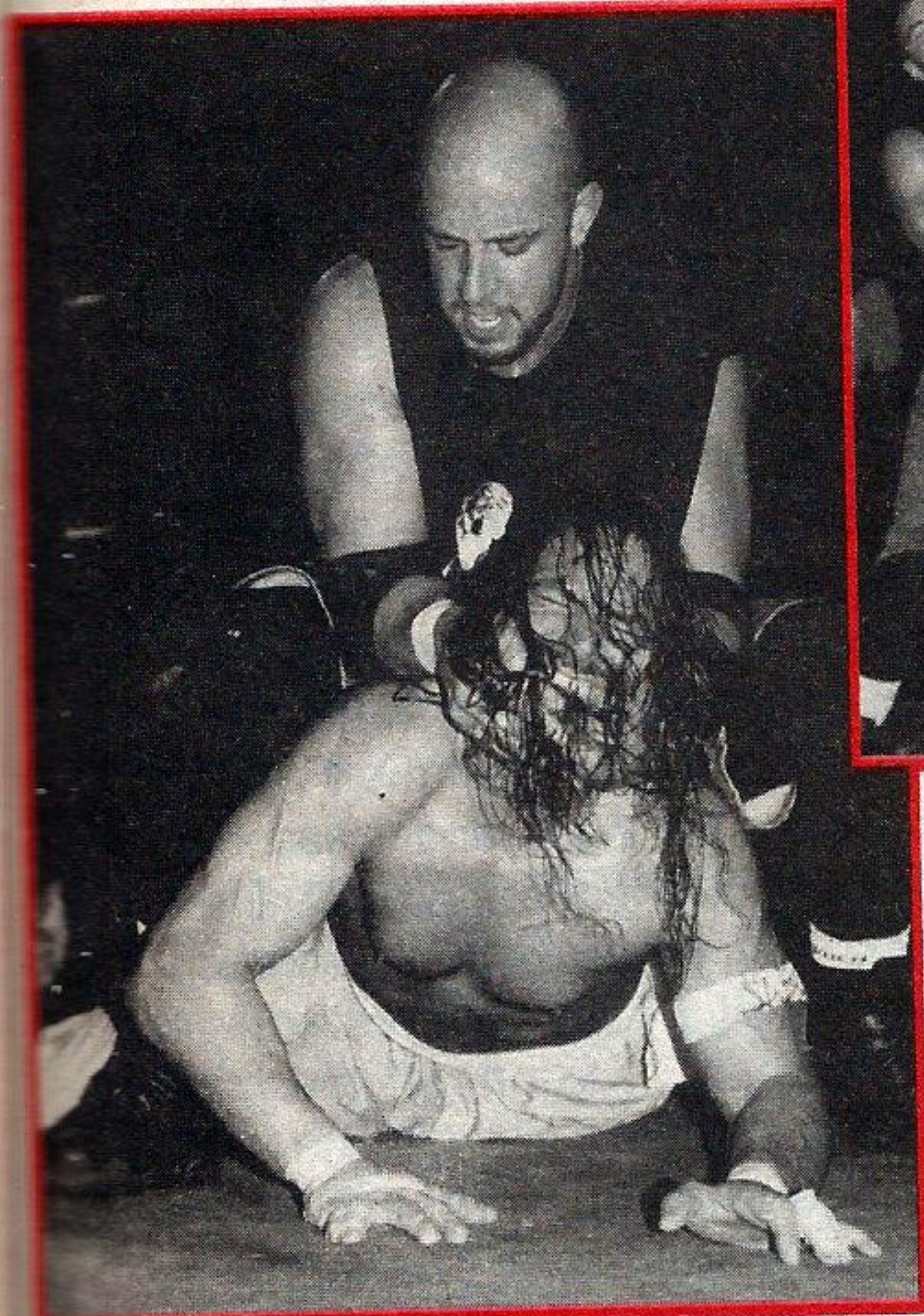


September 1993: P.J. Walker rolls up Irwin R. Schyster to score an upset win as Razor Ramon looks on. Unfortunately, Credible wasn't able to build on the momentum of this win.

June 1995: "Portuguese Man O' War" Aldo Montoya bulldogs Tony DeVito, a man he now faces in ECW. Credible has gone on to become a world champ; DeVito has become a Baldie.

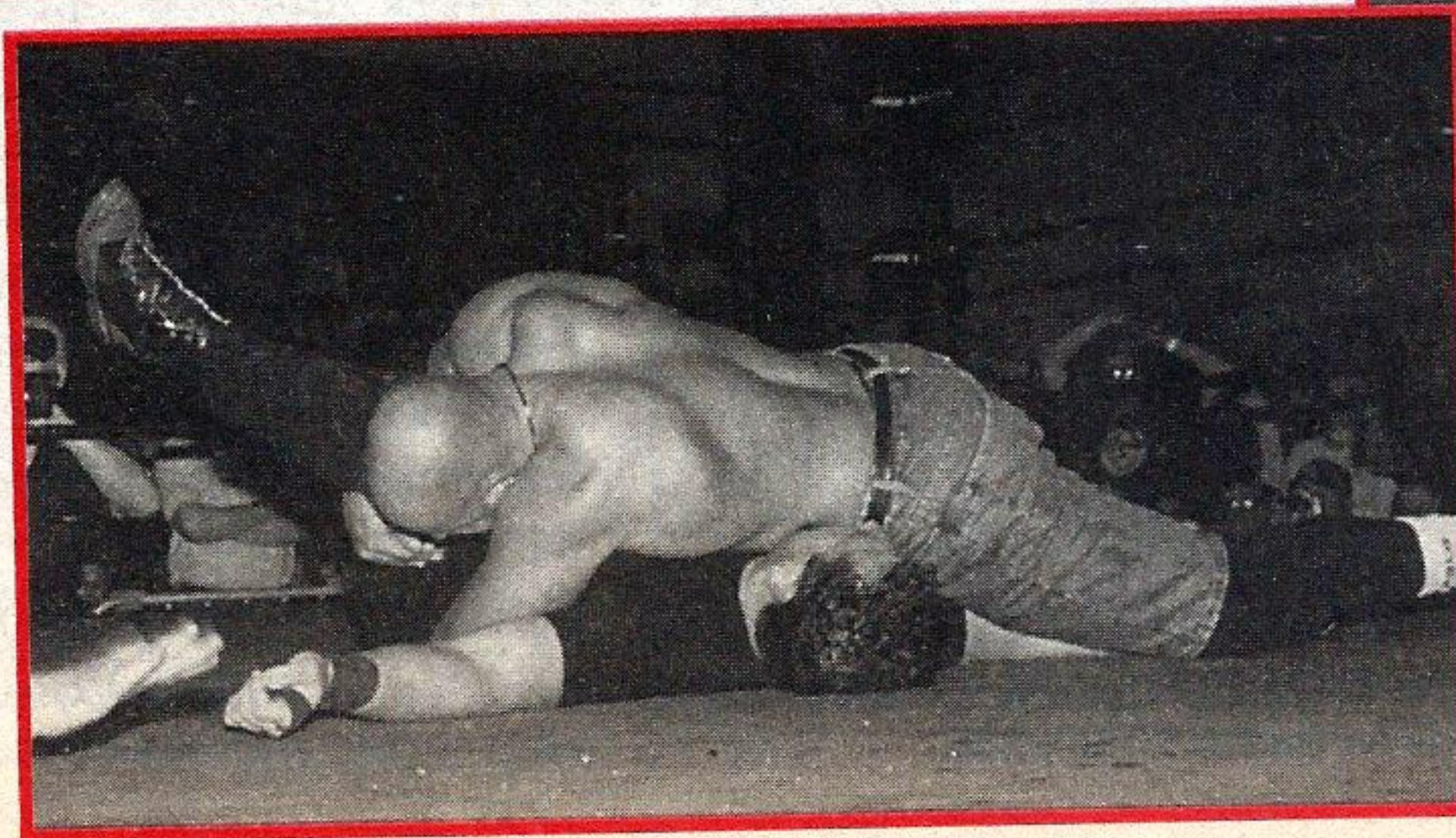
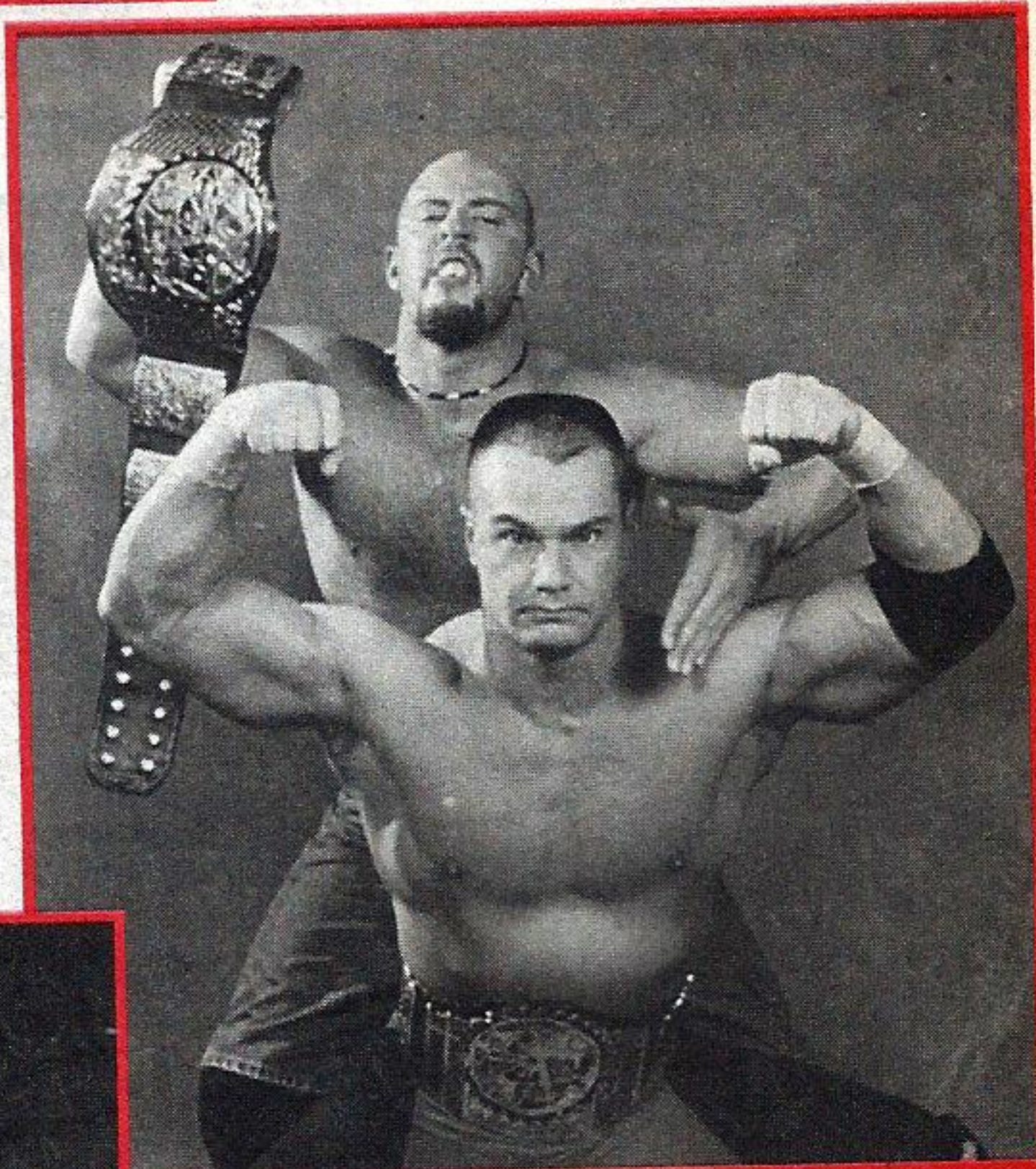


August 1998: Justin and his second, Jason, send The Sandman face-first to the mat. Sandman left ECW for WCW in the middle of his feud with Credible; Justin mistook that for capitulation.



September 1999: To disprove critics who questioned his heart, Credible took great pride in defeating Sabu at Anarchy Rulz '99. Ironically, Justin weakened Sabu with his own hold: the camel clutch.

January 2000: The Impact Players, Lance Storm and Credible, defeated Raven and Tommy Dreamer to win their first ECW World tag team title. Credible broke up the team when he won the ECW World title.



April 2000: Justin Credible covers Tommy Dreamer to win the ECW World title. Although the manner in which he won the title was scurrilous, his growth as a performer is commendable.

Scrapbook

Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five-year intervals dating back a quarter of a century

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
1975

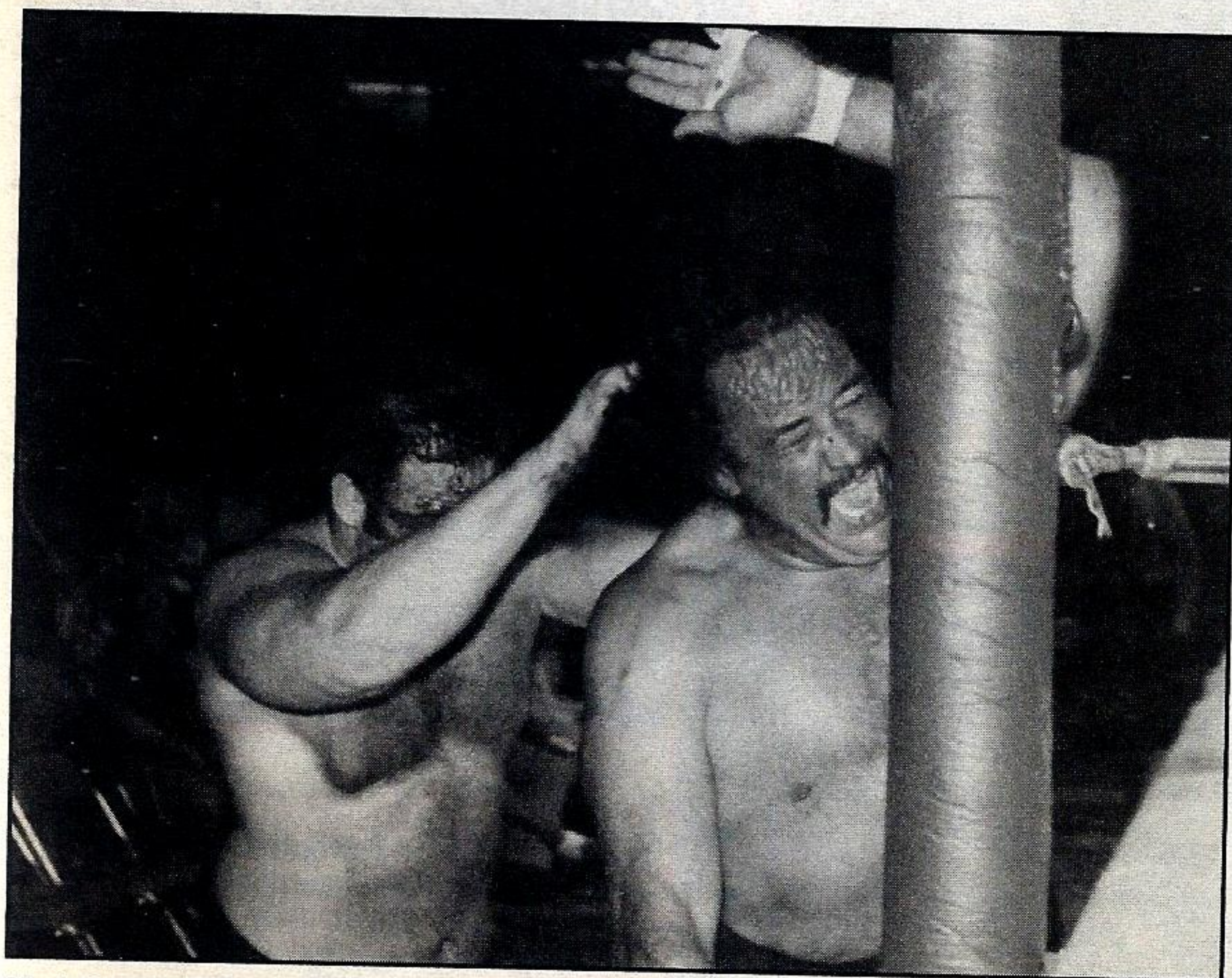
A DISGUSTING AND cruel incident preceded Bruno Sammartino's WWF World title defense against German terror Waldo Von Erich. As Bruno was being awarded a trophy for services to the sport of wrestling, Von Erich ran into the ring, kicked Bruno, wrested the trophy from him, and busted it on the ringpost. Bruno was still dazed when the match began. Von Erich threw Bruno from the ring and attempted to hit the champion with a chair. Bruno was able to grab the chair from his foe and put it to good use to defend the title ... In a riotous six-man match, Andre the Giant, Dominic DeNucci, and Pat Barrett defeated Blackjack

Lanza, Blackjack Mulligan, and Lou Albano ... Bobby Heenan took much-deserved criticism for Nick Bockwinkel and Ray Stevens losing the AWA World tag team title to Crusher and Bruiser. "Those two haven't teamed in ages," Heenan said before the match. "My champions will emerge victorious in two straight falls!" Bockwinkel and Stevens came into the match overconfident and came away from the match without their belts ... An air disaster nearly claimed the lives of wrestlers Ric Flair, Johnny Valentine, Bob Bruggers, and promoter David Crockett. Valentine and Bruggers were listed in serious condition, and Flair and Crockett were listed in fair after a small Cessna 310 crashed near Wilmington, North Carolina ... The Mark Lewin-

King Curtis blood feud worked its way through the South ... Actor/comedian Jackie Gleason made news on the wrestling front when he made a guest appearance at Miami's Convention Hall. While Harley Race was waiting for his opponent to enter the ring, the announcer, aware of the presence of Gleason, a big wrestling fan, asked Jackie to take a bow from the ring. Race grabbed the microphone, and to everyone's surprise, he yelled, "Jackie Gleason means no more to me than any of you bums sitting here in the audience. He's just a big, fat bum!" Gleason assumed a fighter's stance, confronted Race, and demanded, "What did you call me?" Race repeated the insult, and Gleason hit Race with a left to the body and a right to the head before being ushered away by several wrestlers and policemen ... In one of the most vicious battles of all-time, The Sheik wrestled Abdullah the Butcher inside a steel cage in Atlanta. As the two wrestlers bled profusely, it became apparent that neither man would have the strength to climb out of the cage. The match was ruled a draw.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Jack Brisco; 2—Harley Race; 3—Shohei "Giant" Baba; 4—Dory Funk Jr.; 5—The Sheik; 6—Terry Funk; 7—King Curtis; 8—Abdullah the Butcher; 9—Angelo Mosca; 10—Paul Jones.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bruno Sammartino; 2—Ivan Koloff; 3—Superstar Graham; 4—Bugsy McGraw; 5—Ivan Putski; 6—Spiros Arion; 7—Waldo Von Erich; 8—Haystacks Calhoun; 9—Baron Sci-



Mark Lewin sends King Curtis headfirst into the ringpost. Their feud, which raged throughout the South in 1975, set new standards for barbaric violence.

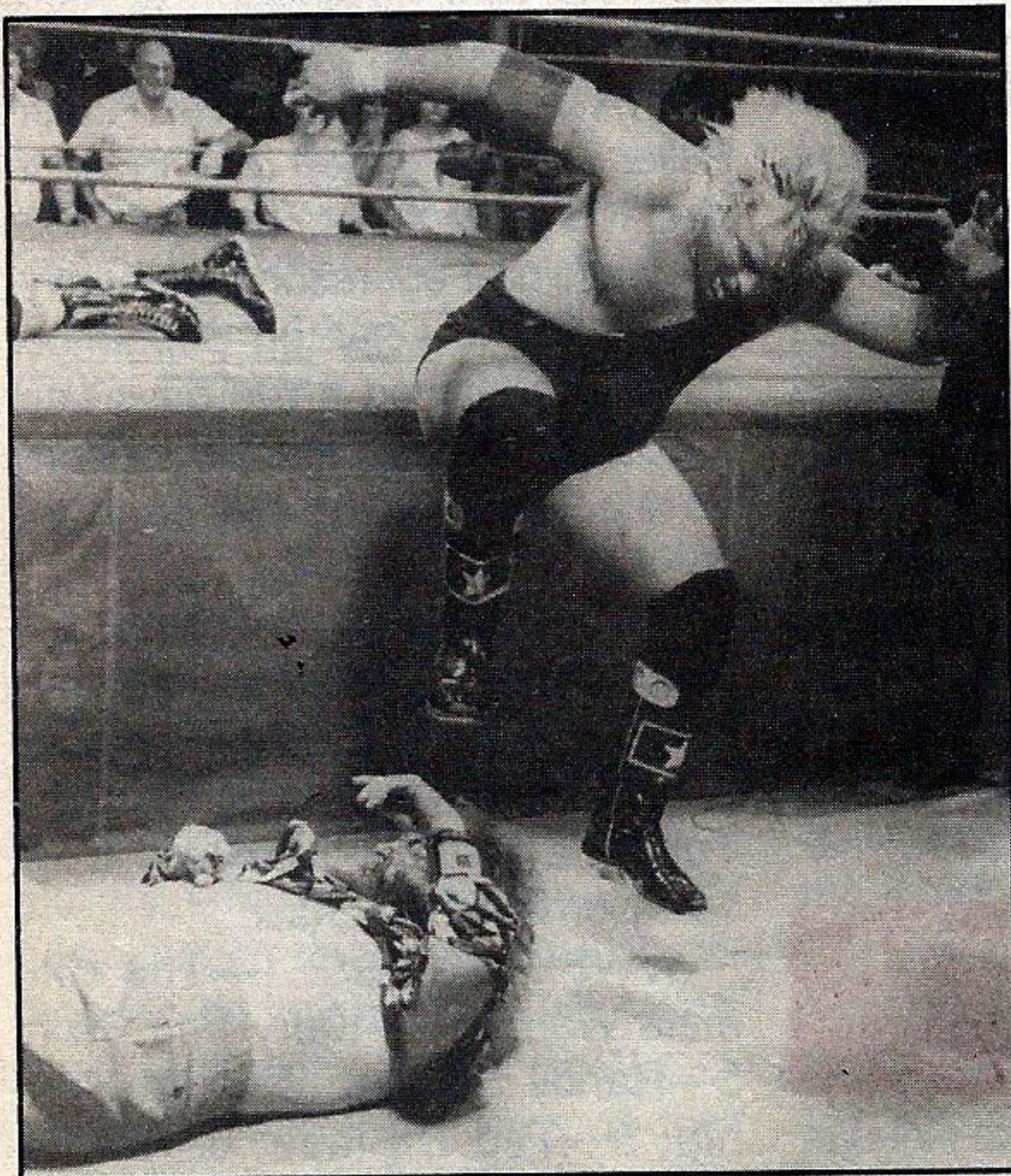
cluna; 10—Gorilla Monsoon.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Billy Robinson; 3—Baron Von Raschke; 4—Nick Bockwinkel; 5—Pampero Firpo; 6—Crusher; 7—Bruiser; 8—Rene Goulet; 9—Soldier LeBoeuf; 10—Greg Gagne.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Blackjacks; 2—Bruiser & Crusher; 3—The Mongols; 4—Jimmy & Johnny Valiant; 5—Gene & Ole Anderson; 6—Dick Slater & Bob Orton Jr.; 7—The Masked Superstars; 8—The Infernos; 9—The Legionnaires; 10—Tony Parisi & Louis Cerdan.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1980

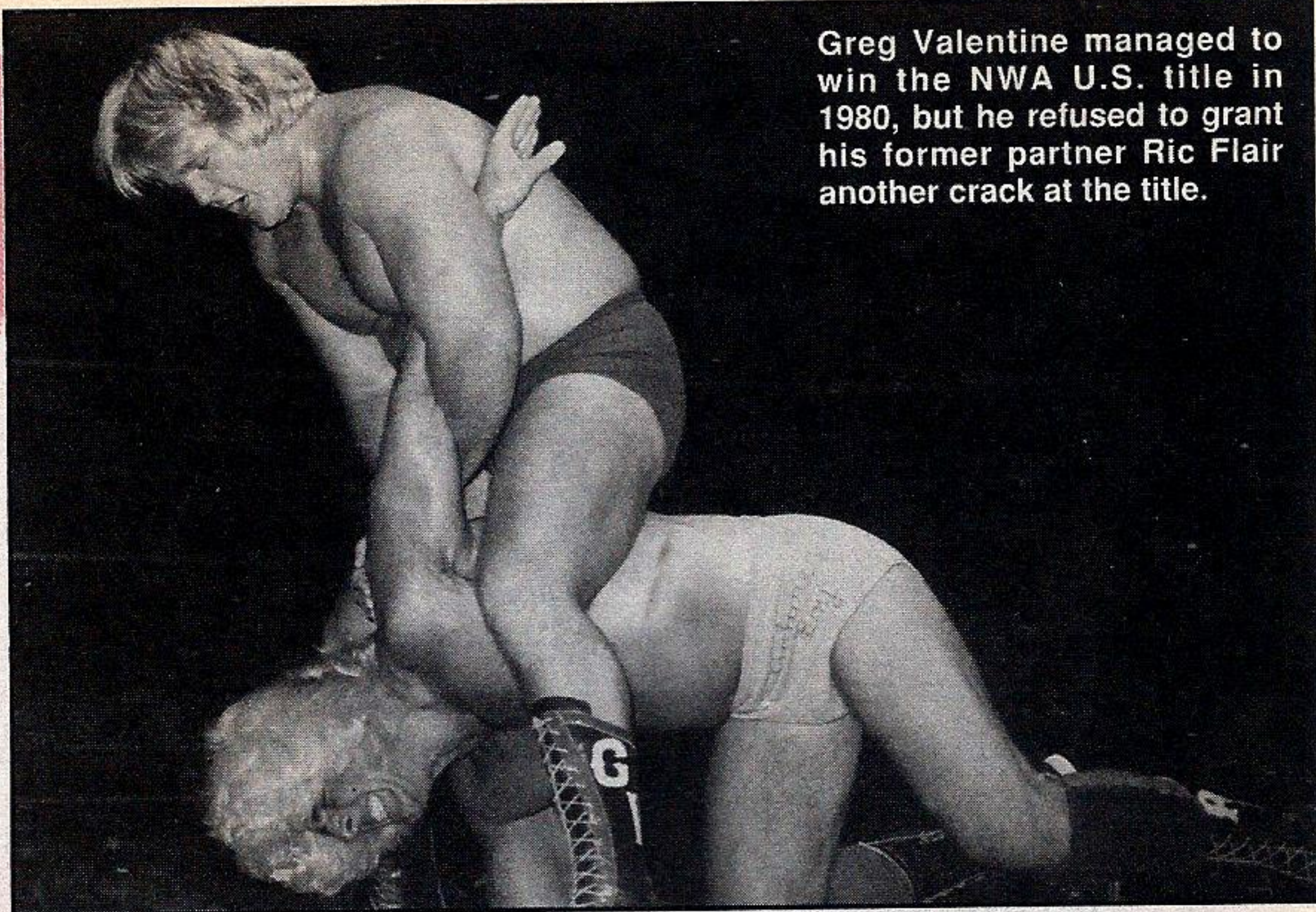
SHOHEI "GIANT" BABA used a combination of neckbreakers, suplexes, and dropkicks to win the NWA World title from Harley Race on September 4 in Tokyo, Japan. The win, coming at the 14:05 mark, made Baba a three-time NWA World champion, but Race was not discouraged. Six days later in Ostu, Japan, he regained the belt to begin his fifth reign as NWA kingpin ... On Sep-



Bobby Jagers does the two-step on a helpless Sir Oliver Humperdink. After Jagers and Lord Al Hays (not pictured) were finished with Humperdink, the troublesome manager was left with a cast on his leg.

tember 9, The Samoans won the final round of a tag team tournament to determine new WWF World tag team champions in the wake of Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales being stripped of the title. Backlund and Morales had beaten The Samoans for the belts, but the WWF ruled that Backlund had to either relinquish the tag team title or his World title ... The wrestling world was shocked to see brothers Lars and Ole Anderson square off

in a series of bloody slugfests ... Sir Oliver Humperdink wound up with his leg in a cast following an attack at the hands of Lord Al Hays and Bobby Jagers ... Greg Valentine refused to give Ric Flair another shot at the NWA U.S. heavyweight title ... Jerry Brisco and Dick Murdoch teamed for a series of matches in Florida ... Andre the Giant continued to be frustrated by his inability to gain a victory over Hulk Hogan. In one match, which was refereed by Gorilla Monsoon, Hogan claimed Monsoon did all he could to sway the match in Andre's favor.



Greg Valentine managed to win the NWA U.S. title in 1980, but he refused to grant his former partner Ric Flair another crack at the title.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Harley Race; 2—Greg Valentine; 3—Dusty Rhodes; 4—Ted DiBiase; 5—Hussein Arab; 6—Dennis Condrey; 7—Ken Patera; 8—Dick Slater; 9—Mr. Wrestling II; 10—Bugsy McGraw.

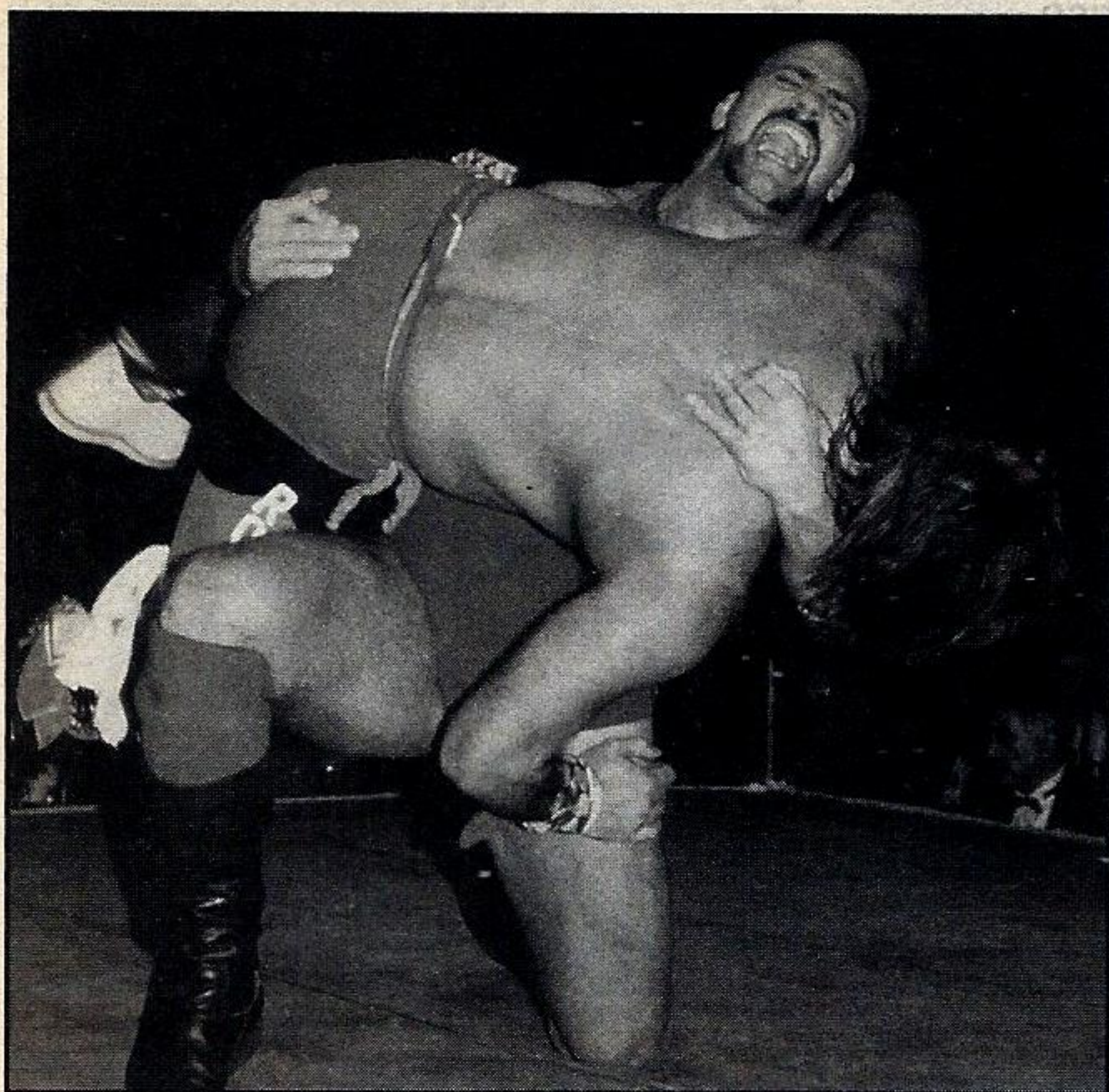
WWF RATINGS: 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Hulk Hogan; 3—Larry Zbyszko; 4—Ken Patera; 5—Pat Patterson; 6—Pedro Morales; 7—Ivan Putski; 8—Tony Atlas; 9—The Hangman; 10—Tony Garea.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Nick Bockwinkel; 3—Crusher Blackwell; 4—Crusher; 5—Mad Dog Vachon; 6—Dino Bravo; 7—Jesse Ventura; 8—Tito Santana; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—John Studd.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Ray Stevens & Jimmy Snuka; 2—Jesse Ventura & Adrian Adonis; 3—The Samoans; 4—The Assassins; 5—Ivan Koloff & Nikolai Volkoff; 6—Terry Gordy & Buddy Roberts; 7—Jack & Jerry Brisco; 8—Rick Steamboat & Jay Youngblood; 9—Kerry Von Erich & El Halcon; 10—Verne Gagne & Mad Dog Vachon.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1985

AFTER A YEAR and a month as AWA World tag team champions, The Road Warriors were dethroned by the duo of Jim Garvin and Steve Regal on Sep-



Nikita Koloff and his uncle Ivan brought the NWA tag team reign of The Rock 'n' Roll Express to an end in Charlotte in October 1985. It was the second NWA World tag title for the Russians.

tember 29 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The interference of Michael Hayes was the deciding factor in the bout: Just as Animal lifted Garvin for what would have been a match-ending backbreaker, Hayes leaped from the top turnbuckle and crashed into Garvin, who fell on Animal and knocked him unconscious for the pin ... Meanwhile, on the NWA tag team scene, Ivan and Nikita Koloff ended the first World title reign of The Rock 'n' Roll express and captured their second World tag title on October 13 in Charlotte, North Carolina ... MTV was featuring the WWF's music video, "Land Of 1,000 Dances" ... A Philadelphia steel cage match featured a bloody melee between the team of Paul Orndorff and Bruno Sammartino and Roddy Piper and Bob Orton; Orndorff climbed over the top of the cage first to claim victory for his team ... Kevin Sullivan stole Kendall Windham's Florida belt and refused to return it to NWA officials, who fined him \$100 for each day he kept it ... Former WWF World champion Bob Backlund was named assistant wrestling coach at Central Connecticut State University ... Andre the Giant wrestled in Japan wearing a Strong Machine mask; he was known as Giant Ma-

chine ... John Tatum introduced Missy Hyatt as his valet in Texas ... More than 25,000 fans in Puerto Rico were on hand to watch Carlos Colon battle Abdullah the Butcher to a bloody double-disqualification.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Tully Blanchard; 3—Terry Taylor; 4—Kerry Von Erich; 5—Magnus T.A.; 6—Nikita Koloff; 7—Wahoo McDaniel;

8—Harley Race; 9—Brian Adias; 10—Lance Von Erich.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Rick Martel; 2—Sgt. Slaughter; 3—Larry Zbyszko; 4—Stan Hansen; 5—Jim Garvin; 6—Nick Bockwinkel; 7—Michael Hayes; 8—Boris Zuhov; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—Scott Hall.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—Tito Santana; 3—Magnificent Muraco; 4—Roddy Piper; 5—Rick Steamboat; 6—Randy Savage; 7—Paul Orndorff; 8—Terry Funk; 9—Junkyard Dog; 10—Andre the Giant.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Road Warriors; 2—Ivan & Nikita Koloff; 3—Greg Valentine & Brutus Beefcake; 4—Jim Garvin & Steve Regal; 5—Chris Adams & Gino Hernandez; 6—Ole & Arn Anderson; 7—Steve Keirn & Stan Lane; 8—Wahoo McDaniel & Billy Jack Haynes; 9—The Rock 'n' Roll Express; 10—Al Perez & Wendell Cooley.

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 1990

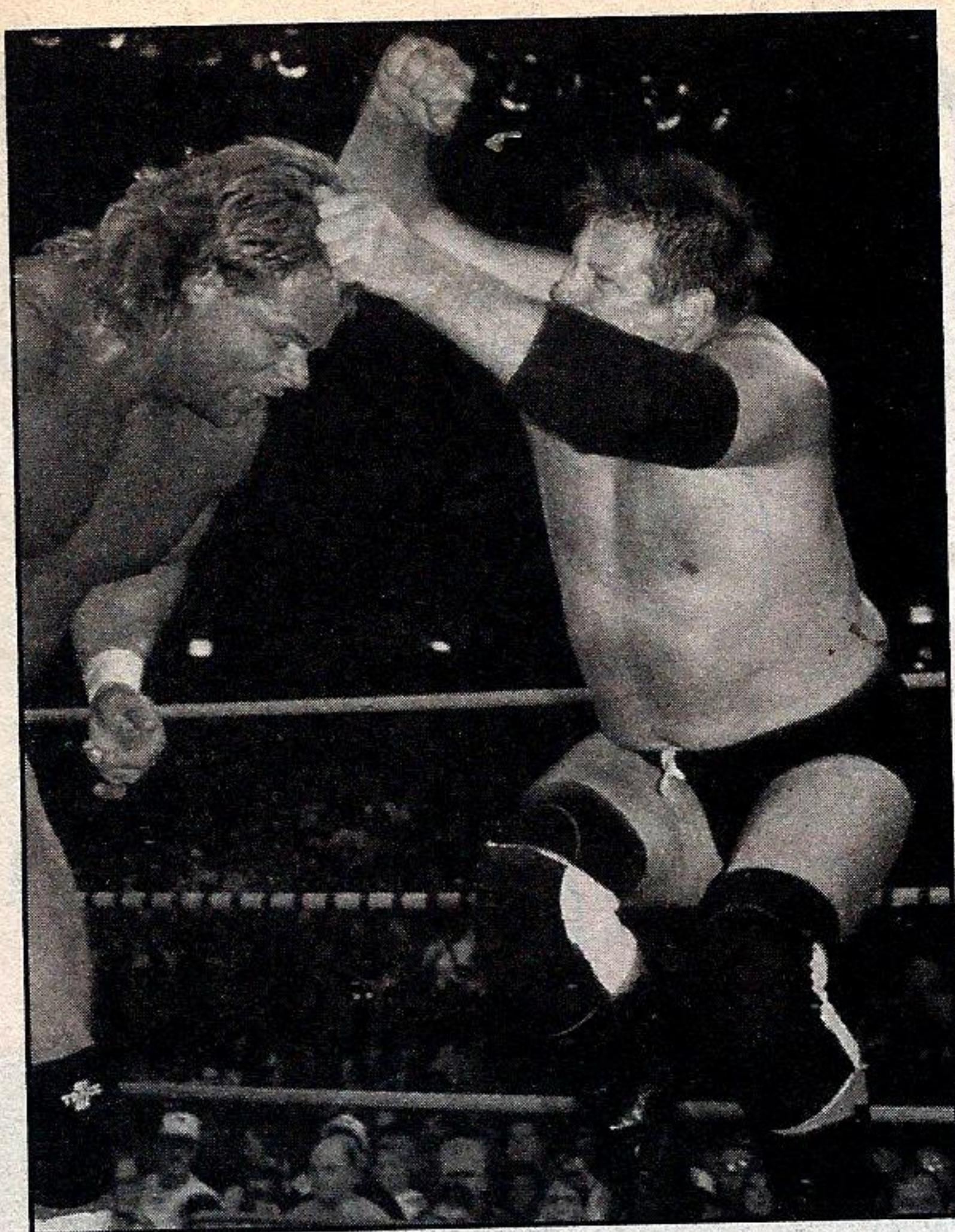
A RICK MARTEL-Jake Roberts feud started in the WWF when Martel sprayed some of his "Arrogance" cologne at Damian, Roberts' pet snake, during an

interview ... D.C. Drake became the first Tri-State Wrestling Alliance heavyweight champion when he beat Rockin' Rebel in Philadelphia on September 15. Drake got the pin after Woman threw powder in Rebel's face. Rebel was supposed to be seconded by Baby Doll, but she left the ringside area after Woman paid her off ... NWA World champion Sting was attacked by Sid Vicious and the mysterious Black Scorpion at a TV taping ... Stan Hansen won the NWA U.S. title by beating Lex Luger at Halloween Havoc on October 27 in Chicago. He finished Luger off with a lariat ... Also on the Halloween card, Vicious appeared to win the NWA World title by pinning Sting. Moments after the pin, however, it was discovered that the "Sting" that Vicious pinned was actually Sid's fellow Horseman Barry Windham in disguise. The real Sting, who had been tied up in the dressing room, charged out to the ring and eventually pinned Vicious to retain the belt ... Johnathan Holliday entered the WWF as a manager and picked Buddy Rose and The Black Demon as his first two proteges ... Ronnie Gossett, who weighed in at more than 450 pounds, began managing USWA tag team champions Robert Fuller and Jeff Jarrett ... The Lightning Kid (now X-Pac) lost the Global Wrestling Federation light heavyweight title to Chaz on September 13, then regained it two days later ... Dusty Rhodes started working as a troubleshooting referee in the NWA.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Sting; 2—Stan Hansen; 3—Sid Vicious; 4—Lex Luger; 5—The Black Scorpion; 6—Arn Anderson; 7—Ric Flair; 8—Terry Taylor; 9—Junkyard Dog; 10—Norman the Lunatic.

WWF RATINGS: 1—The Ultimate Warrior; 2—Kerry Von Erich; 3—Randy Savage; 4—Curt Hennig; 5—Ted DiBiase; 6—Earthquake; 7—Hulk Hogan; 8—Big Bossman; 9—Sgt. Slaughter; 10—Dino Bravo.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Larry



Halloween Havoc 1990 was a spooky night for Lex Luger, who dropped the NWA U.S. title to Stan Hansen after Hansen scored with his dreaded lariat.

Zbyszko; 2—Tommy Jammer; 3—Nikita Koloff; 4—The Trooper; 5—Tatsumi Fujinami; 6—Scott Norton; 7—Col. DeBeers; 8—Wayne Bloom; 9—Larry Cameron; 10—Buck Zumhofe.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Doom; 2—Rick & Scott Steiner; 3—The Rockers; 4—Arn Anderson & Ric Flair; 5—The Hart Foundation; 6—The Nasty Boys; 7—The Legion of Doom; 8—Tony Anthony & Doug Gilbert; 9—Greg Valentine & The Honky Tonk Man; 10—Rip & Larry Oliver.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1995

MIKEY WHIPWRECK PULLED off one of the greatest upsets in recent pro wrestling history when he defeated ECW heavyweight champion The Sandman for the belt at the ECW Arena. After the match, several ECW mid-carders carried Whipwreck on their shoulders ... *WCW Monday Nitro* made its TNT debut on Labor Day 1995. Lex Luger, who had wrestled in the WWF just days earlier, made

a surprise appearance ... Fatu (now Rikishi Phatu) began an anti-drug campaign in the WWF that endeared him to young fans around the country ... September and October marked a period of great instability for tag team wrestling. Newly appointed WWF President Gorilla Monsoon forced Shawn Michaels and Diesel to give the WWF tag title back to Owen Hart and Yokozuna after Diesel pinned Hart on September 24. The reasoning: Hart was not an official participant in the match, as Davey Boy Smith was wrestling in his place, and Hart was only pinned after showing up at the end and

interfering. Hart and Yoko lost the title to The Smokin' Gunns the very next day. In ECW, The Pit Bulls, Raven and Stevie Richards, Public Enemy, and The Sandman and 2 Cold Scorpio all reigned during a three-week period. In WCW, Harlem Heat won the title on September 17, lost it to Marcus Alexander Bagwell and Scotty Riggs on September 18, then regained the belts on September 27 ... Shawn Michaels was forced to forfeit the Intercontinental title to Dean Douglas at the October 22 *In Your House* due to injuries he suffered a week before the pay-per-view. Later in the card, Razor Ramon defeated Douglas to win the I-C belt a third time ... As Alundra Blayze, Madusa defeated Bertha Faye to win the WWF women's title on October 23. A few months later, Madusa showed up in WCW and threw the WWF women's title belt into a trash can ... The Gladiator (Mike Awesome) defeated Hayabusa to win his first of two Frontier Martial Arts brass knuckles titles ... The feud between

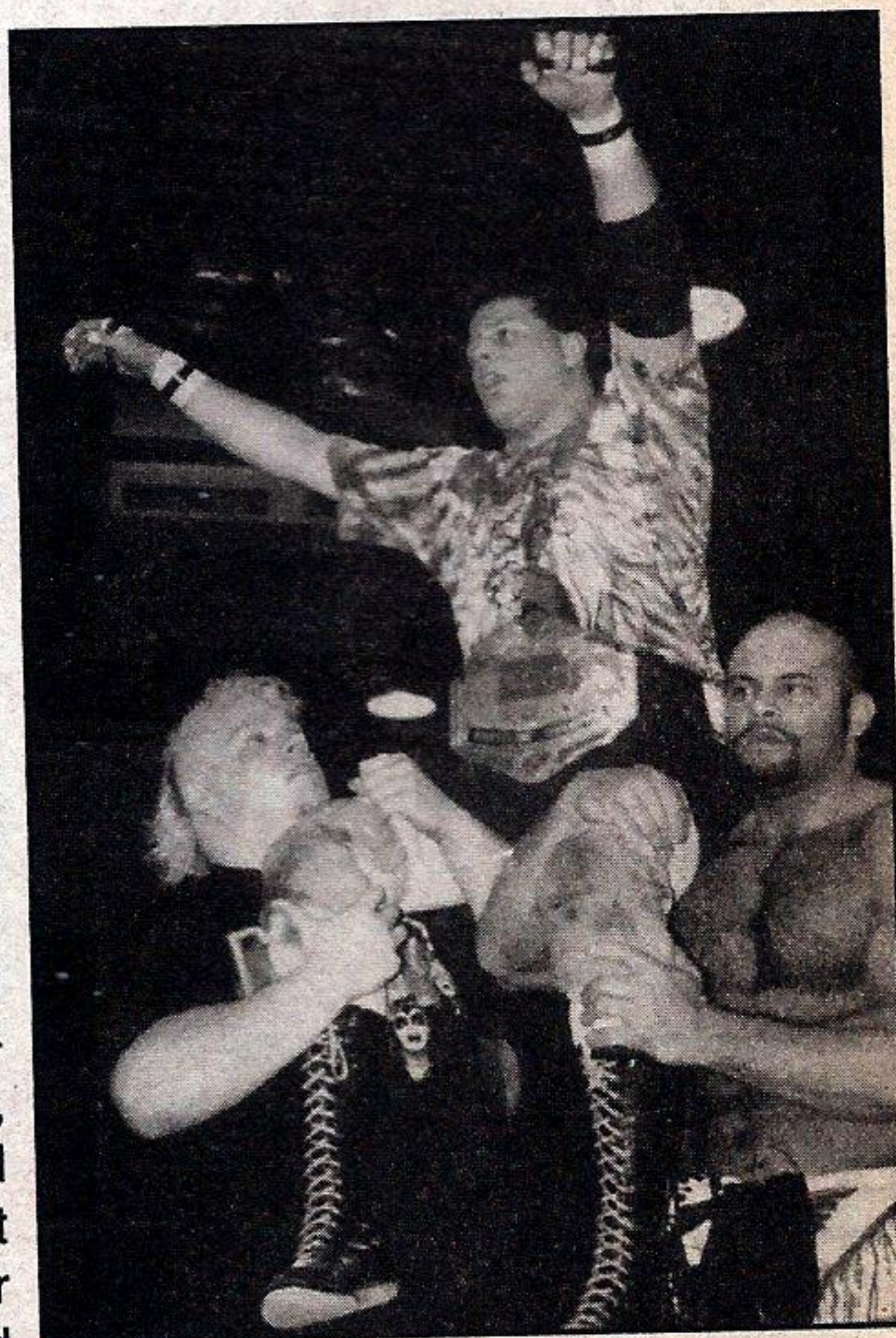
Johnny B. Badd (Marc Mero) and "Diamond" Dallas Page climaxed at Halloween Havoc when Badd pinned Page to win the TV title.

WCW RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—Lex Luger; 3—Sting; 4—Randy Savage; 5—Johnny B. Badd; 6—Arn Anderson; 7—Ric Flair; 8—Meng; 9—Paul Orndorff; 10—Dallas Page.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Diesel; 2—Razor Ramon; 3—Yokozuna; 4—Dean Douglas; 5—Davey Boy Smith; 6—Bret Hart; 7—Shawn Michaels; 8—The Undertaker; 9—Waylon Mercy; 10—Jean-Pierre Lafitte.

ECW RATINGS: 1—Mikey Whipwreck; 2—2 Cold Scorpio; 3—The Sandman; 4—Tommy Dreamer; 5—Cactus Jack; 6—Tasmaniac; 7—Raven; 8—Stevie Richards; 9—911; 10—J.T. Smith.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Smokin' Gunns; 2—Harlem Heat; 3—Marcus Bagwell & Scotty Riggs; 4—Owen Hart & Yokozuna; 5—PG-13; 6—Bunkhouse Buck & Dick Slater; 7—Eli & Jacob Blu; 8—The Heavenly Bodies; 9—The Pit Bulls; 10—Maxx Crimson & Jimmy Deo. □

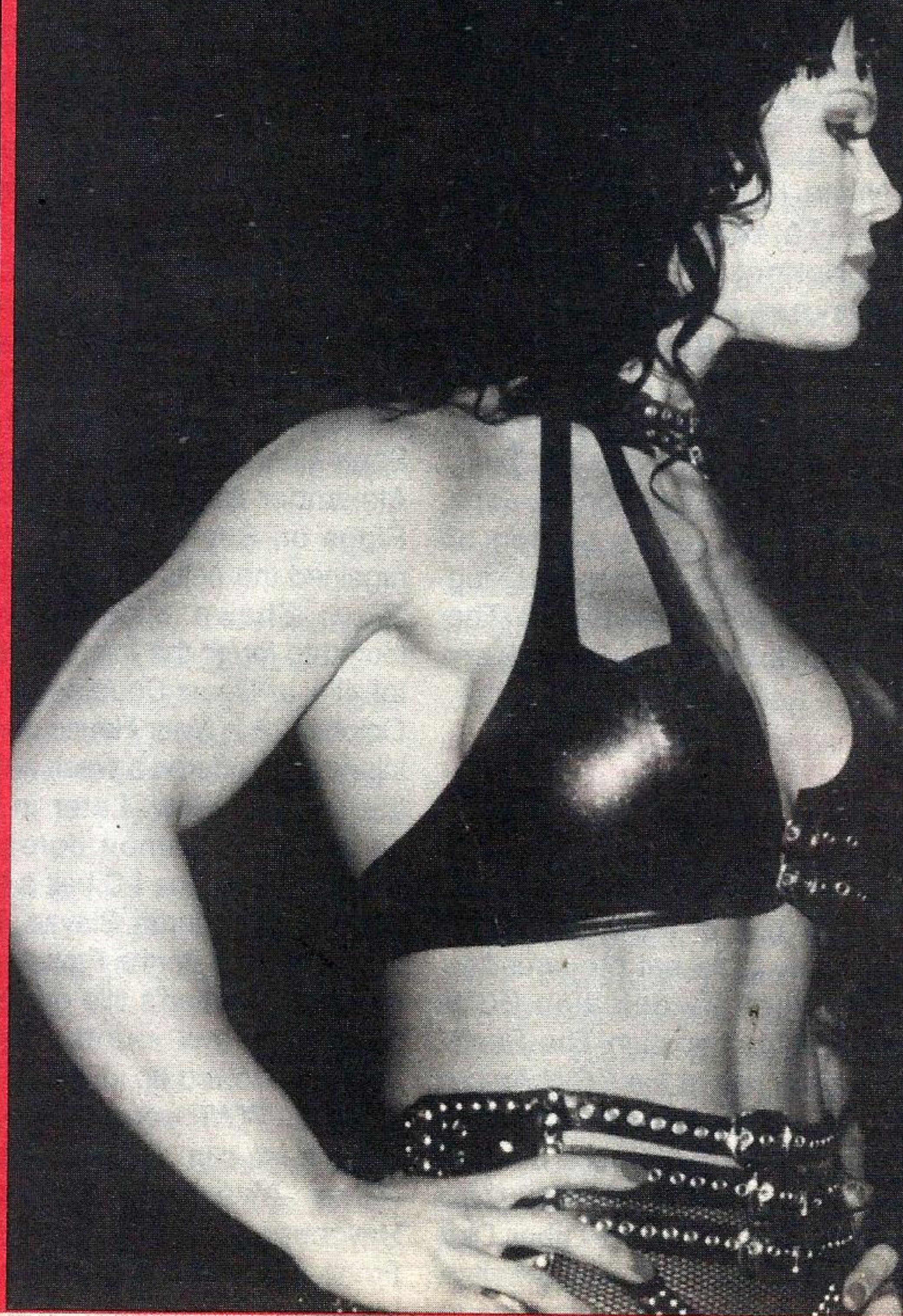


Axl Rotten and Konnan take perennial loser Mikey Whipwreck for a victory lap around the ring after he upset The Sandman to win the ECW heavyweight title in 1995.

**Is CHYNA robbing
EDDIE of his**

LATINO HEAT?

He's one of the best cruiserweight wrestlers in history, but you might not figure it out by watching Eddie Guerrero these days. The lovesick Luchadore will do anything for the love and attention of Chyna

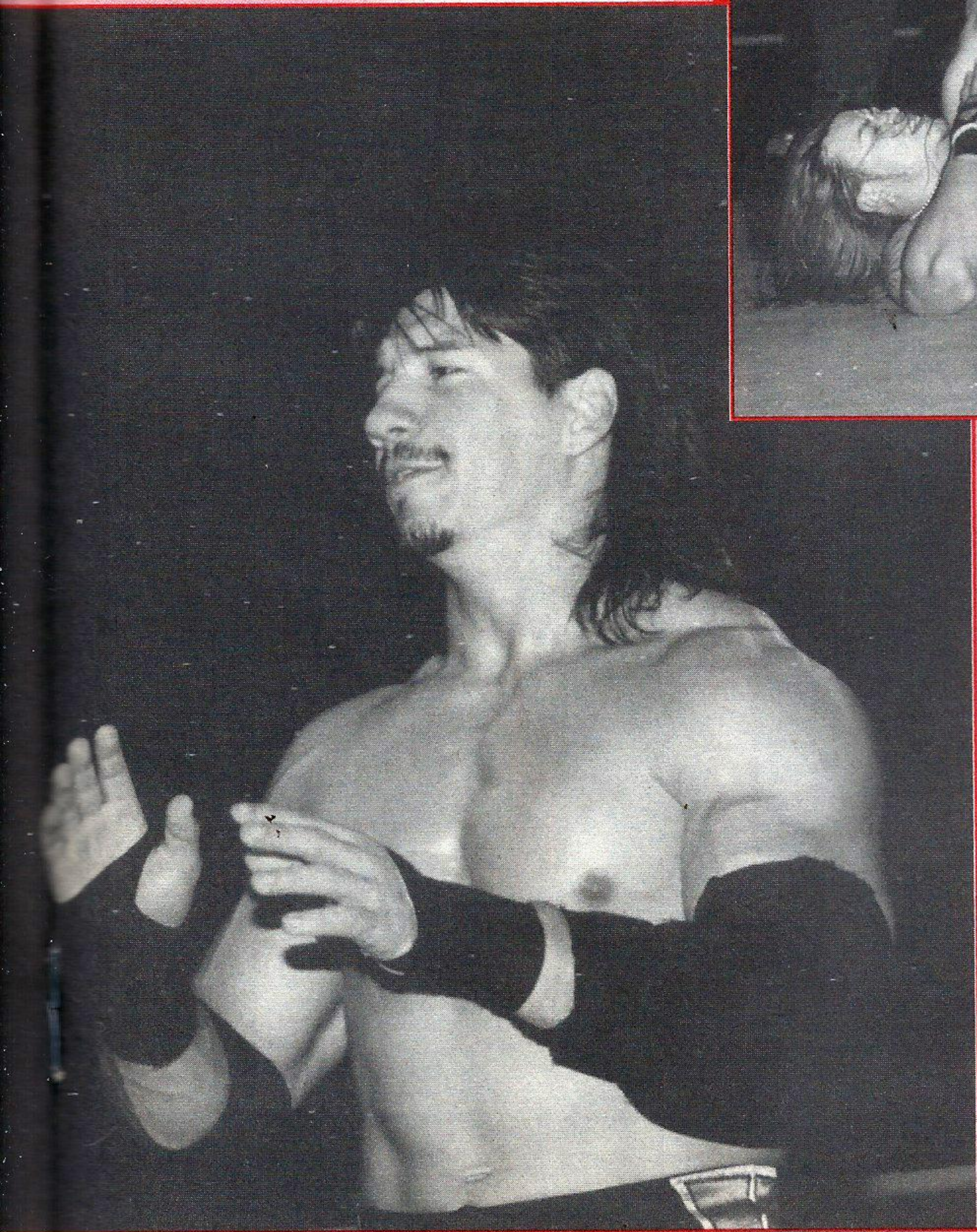
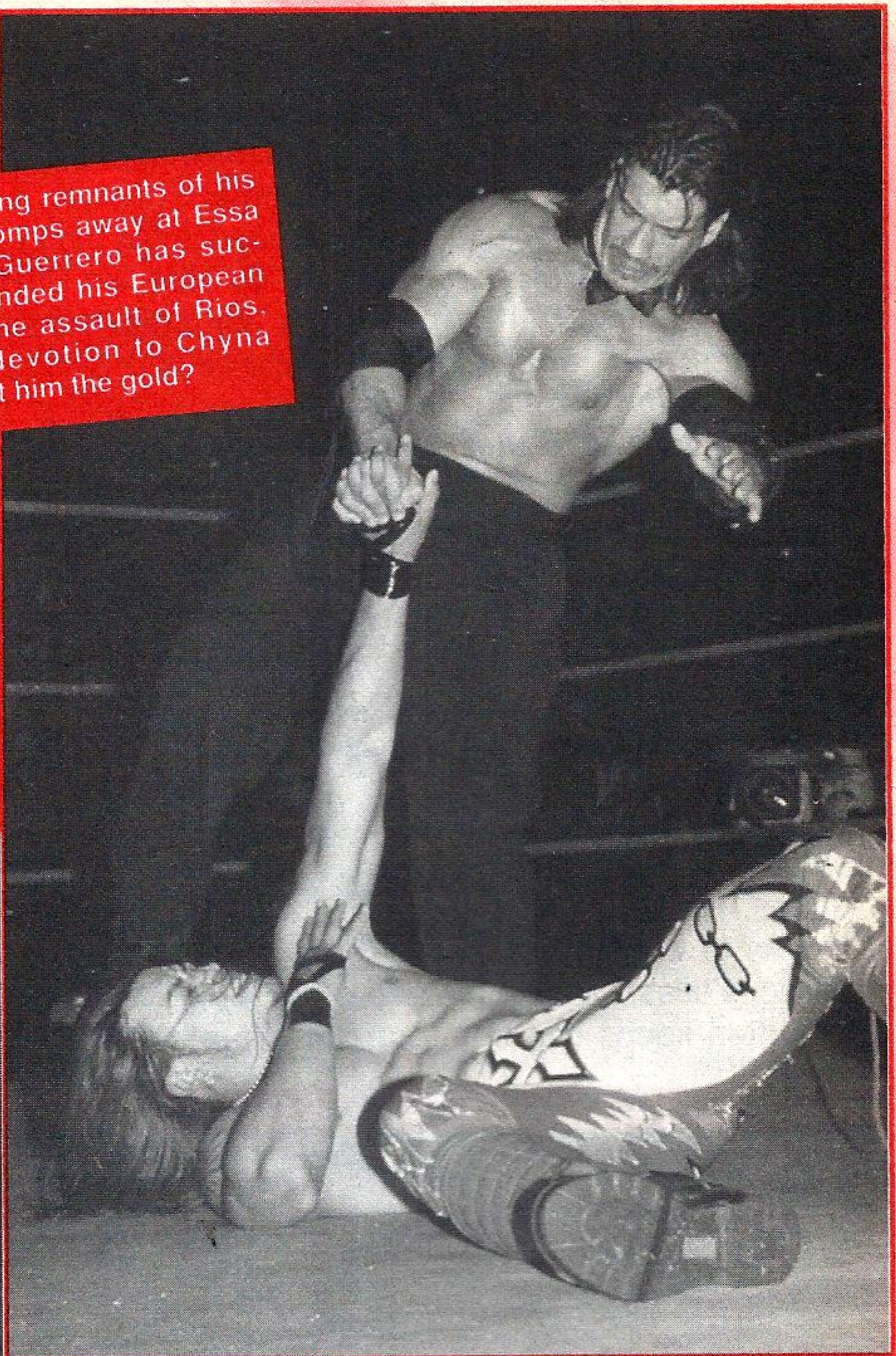


By Dave Rosenbaum

THERE ARE PEOPLE out there—and who knows, you might be one of them—who tune in to *Raw* and *Smackdown* every week just to hear Jerry Lawler yelp, “Latino heat!” whenever he sees Eddie Guerrero and Chyna together. And there are people out there—yup, again, you might be one of them—who think one of the most intriguing storylines in the WWF these days is the red-hot love affair between Eddie and Chyna.

Think about this, you lovers of

Guerrero, wearing remnants of his prom outfit, stomps away at Essa Rios. So far, Guerrero has successfully defended his European title against the assault of Rios, but will his devotion to Chyna eventually cost him the gold?



Latino heat, you romance-loving observers of the Eddie and Chyna coupling: These days, one of the greatest cruiserweight wrestlers in history is famous because ...

One, of his relationship with Chyna.

And two, of the way a broadcaster describes his relationship with Chyna.

What ever happened to Eddie Guerrero the wrestler?

“This guy was one of the best ever,” said Chris Jericho. “He’s still one of the best ever. The worst part about Eddie’s five or so years in WCW was that he never got the respect he thought he deserved. Everyone knew he was a great wrestler, but it was if they were afraid to make a big deal out of him. Now it’s as if the WWF feels the same way. Guerrero’s hot—there’s no doubt about that—

but Chyna's hotter. Eddie has become a caricature of himself."

The truth is, Guerrero has never been hotter. This master of the Lucha Libre style of wrestling was an outstanding college wrestler at the University of New Mexico, a superstar in Mexico's AAA promotion, and a highly regarded competitor in Japan (where the fans take their wrestling very seriously). In the mid-1990s, Guerrero was a member of Los Gringos Locos, the hottest rulebreaking clique in AAA history. He signed with WCW and immediately made an impact, winning two cruiserweight titles and one U.S. title.

Guerrero has always been a superstar because of the way he wrestles. He has never needed gimmicks to win big matches and prestigious titles. Despite his size, which often keeps him from con-

tending for world heavyweight titles, Eddie Guerrero has proudly carried on the family name. Unfortunately, in recent months, Eddie Guerrero seems to have traded in the family name.

Call him Mr. Chyna.

"It's embarrassing," said longtime rival and friend Dean Malenko, who jumped to the WWF along with Guerrero. "He's a great wrestler, but whenever Chyna's around, he walks around like a dog in heat with his tongue hanging out. I don't know what ever happened to the Eddie Guerrero who respected himself and the sport, but the Eddie Guerrero I'm seeing now should be ashamed of himself.

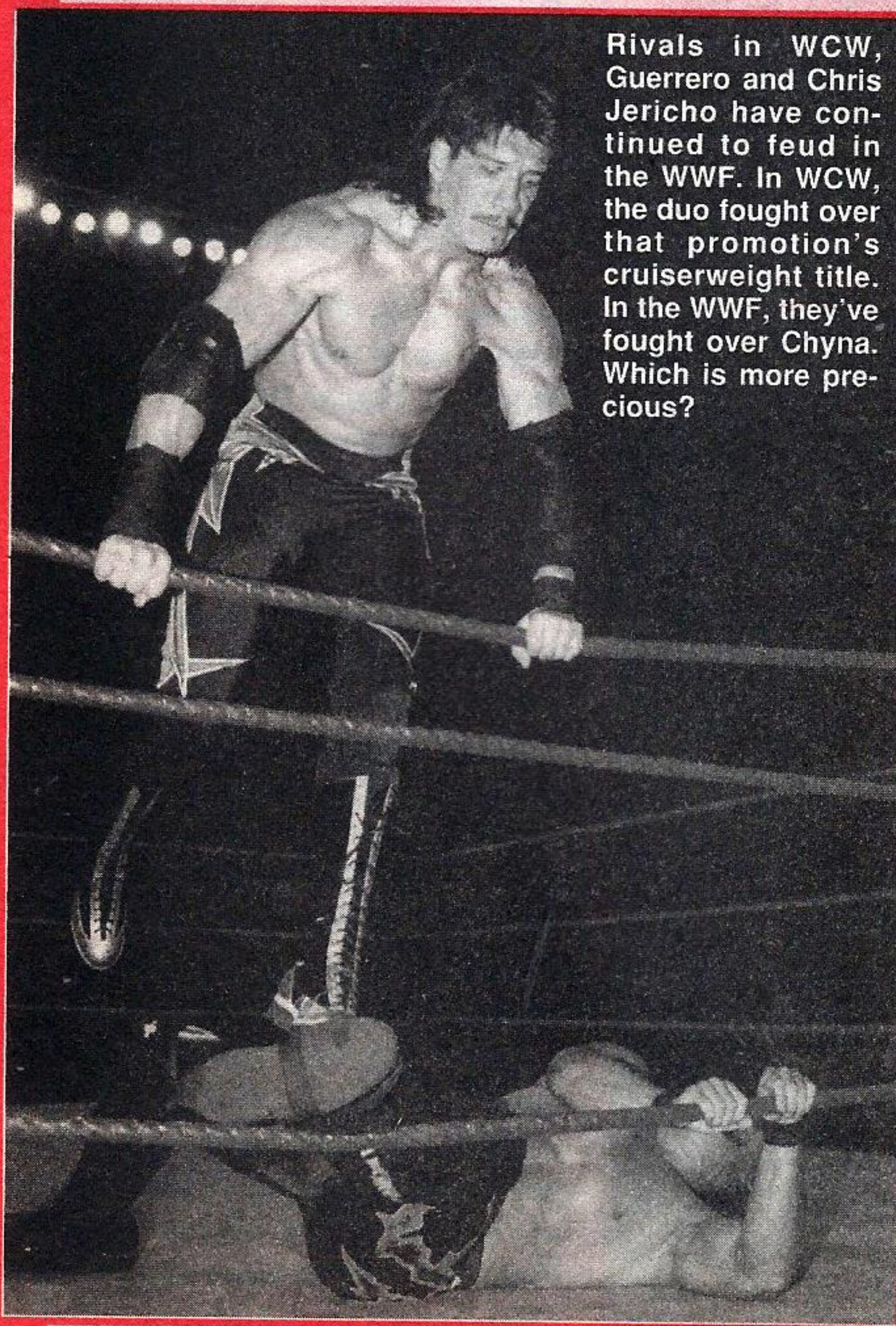
"Chyna's not only his *mamacita*—she's like his boss. The man is totally whipped."

Sure, Guerrero won the WWF European championship with

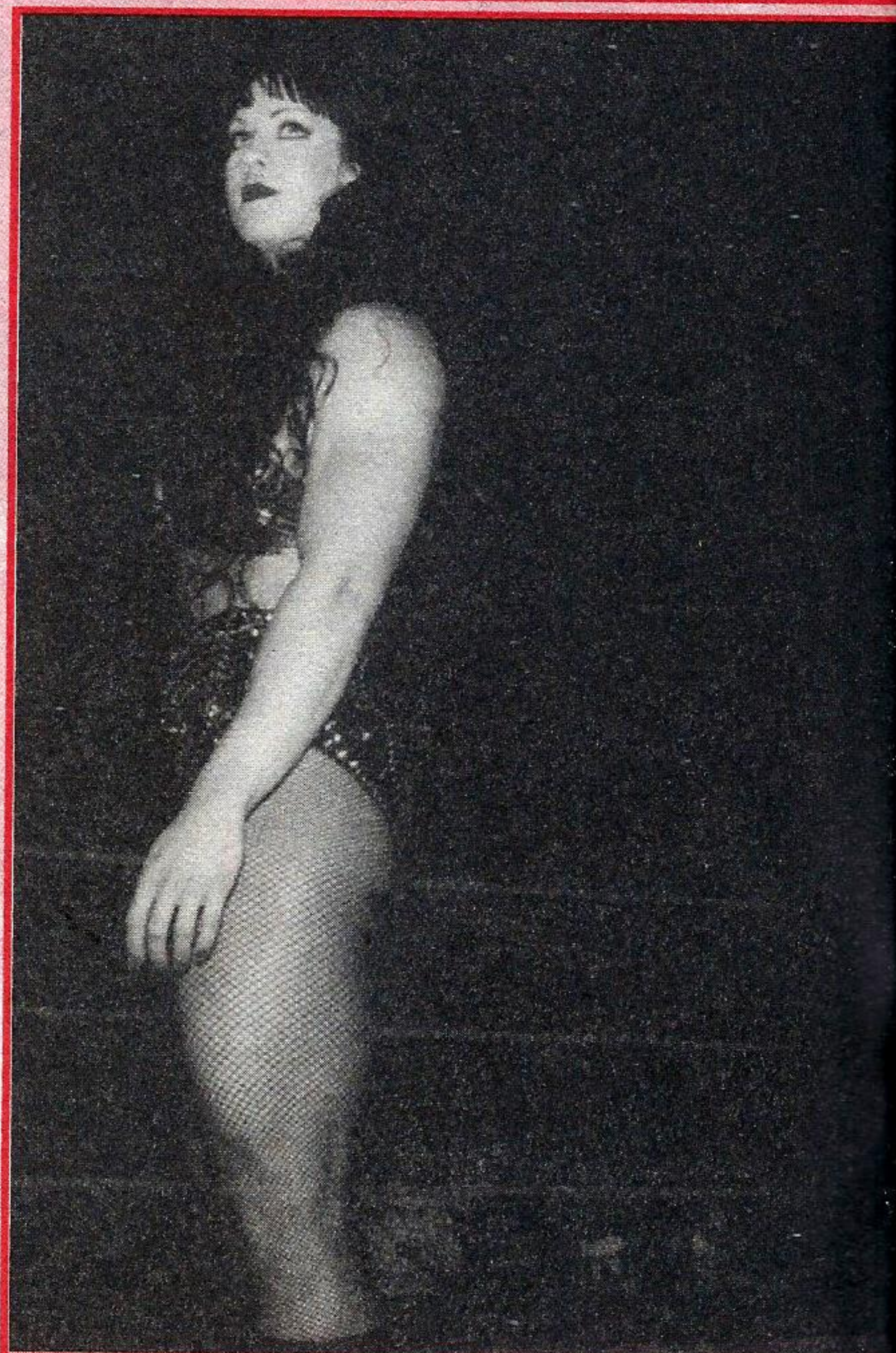
Chyna's help, and his wrestling remains at a high level, but the emphasis these days is more on his character than his wrestling. Rather than portraying himself as a superstar wrestler, Guerrero is portraying himself as that funny guy down the street who works at the taco stand and drives around in a seedy car ... the guy who looks forward to payday so he can spend all of his money on his *mamacita*.

But, of course, this is no ordinary *mamacita*. Chyna's a woman who likes to run the show, sometimes to Guerrero's detriment.

For example, on a recent *Raw*, Guerrero and Chyna wrestled Malenko and Perry Saturn. Guerrero and Chyna were on the verge of victory when Chyna inadvertently gave Eddie a low blow. Saturn rolled up Guerrero for the pin.



Rivals in WCW, Guerrero and Chris Jericho have continued to feud in the WWF. In WCW, the duo fought over that promotion's cruiserweight title. In the WWF, they've fought over Chyna. Which is more precious?



A few days later, Chyna announced that Saturn would wrestle Malenko for the right to wrestle Guerrero for the European title at the Judgment Day pay-per-view. When the match ended

in a draw, Chyna announced that Malenko, Saturn, and Guerrero would compete in a triple threat match. One had to wonder what Guerrero's part was in this decision-making

process, or whether he had any part at all.

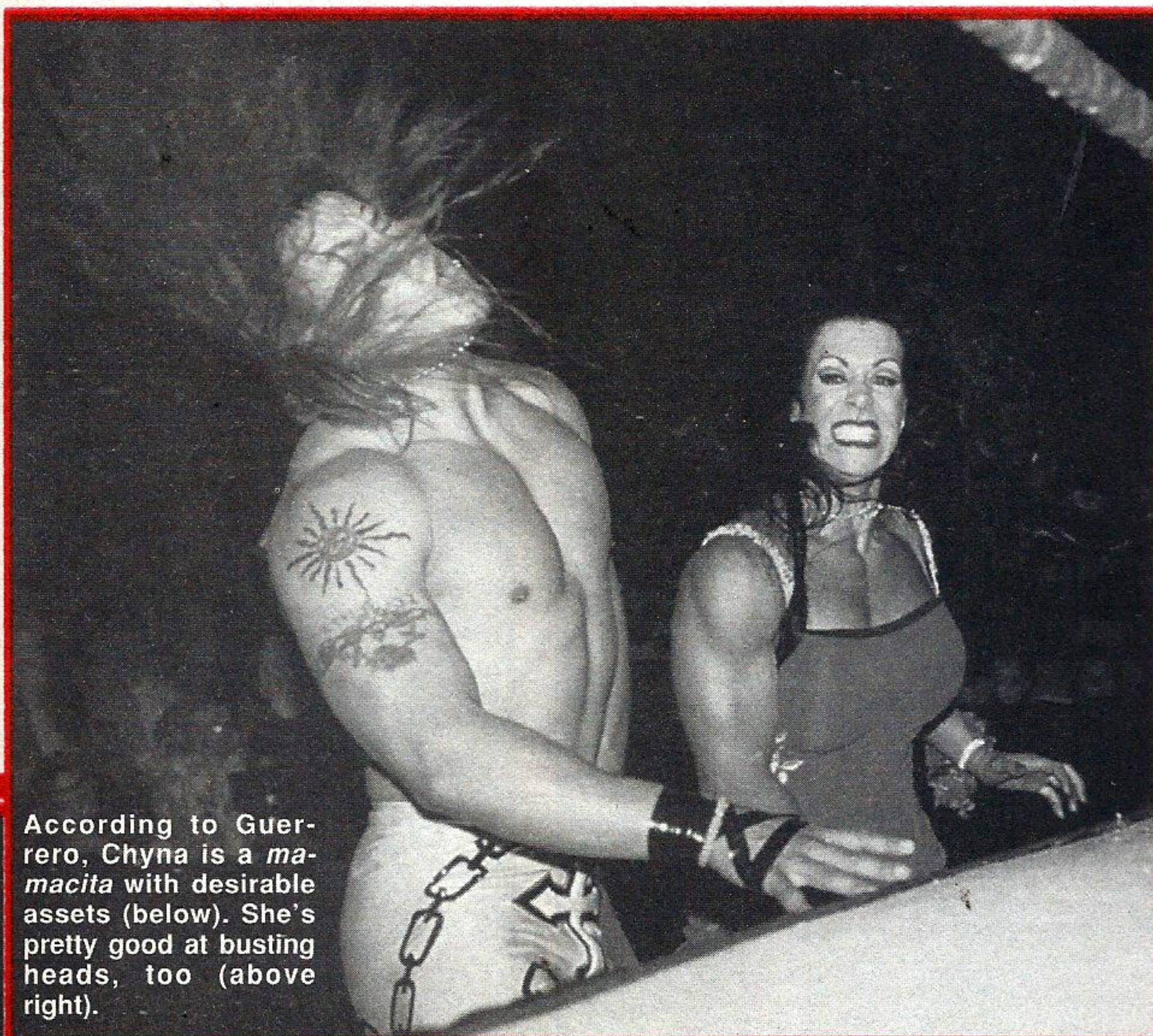
Clearly, Guerrero is bowing down to every one of Chyna's whims. He is letting her run his career. Guerrero, however, never needed anyone to run his career. He always did fine on his own. He has always been a wrestler who does things for himself. He preferred to steer clear of over-the-top gimmicks. He never sold out his Lucha Libre style of wrestling. But for Chyna, Guerrero is willing to do anything, as long as she'll give him the time of day.

As a result, Guerrero the wrestler has been overshadowed by Guerrero the Latin lover, Guerrero the sports entertainer, Guerrero the man who walks around with goo-goo eyes and who has decided that Chyna's wish is his command. Chyna knows this, of course, and has taken advantage of the hold she has over Guerrero. She might really be in love—who

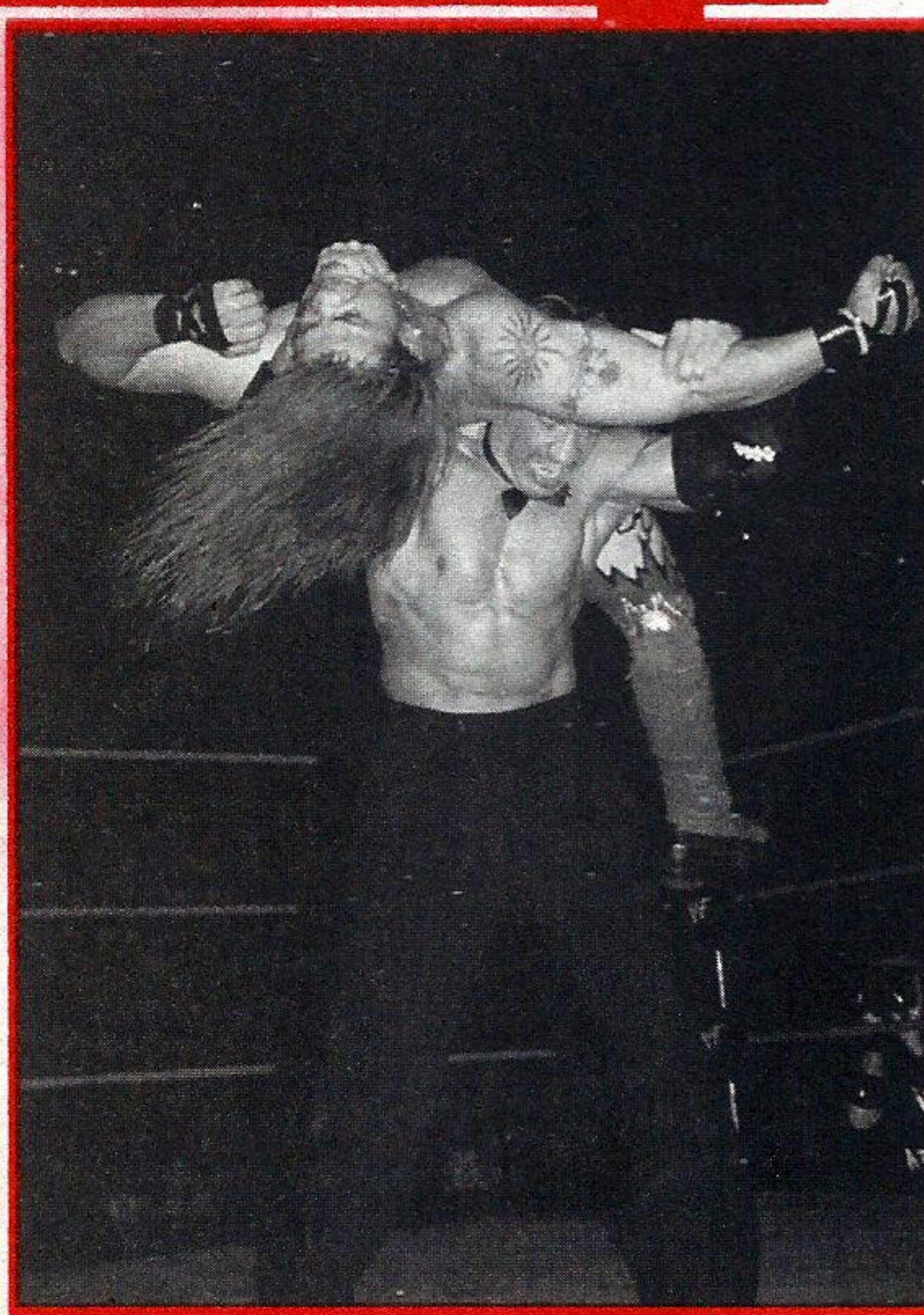
knows—but there's no doubt she's enjoying the attention she's getting from Guerrero and taking advantage of his loyalty.

Eddie's Latino heat, however, is cooling down, maybe not in the backseat of Eddie's car, but in the wrestling ring ... where it counts the most ... where Guerrero does his best work (we think). Guerrero needs to get a grip—and not on Chyna. □

Once a good wrestler, always a good wrestler? Not necessarily. If Guerrero can control his Latino heat, victories against Rios and other mid-carders will come. If his Latino heat goes *loco*, though, he'll be in trouble.

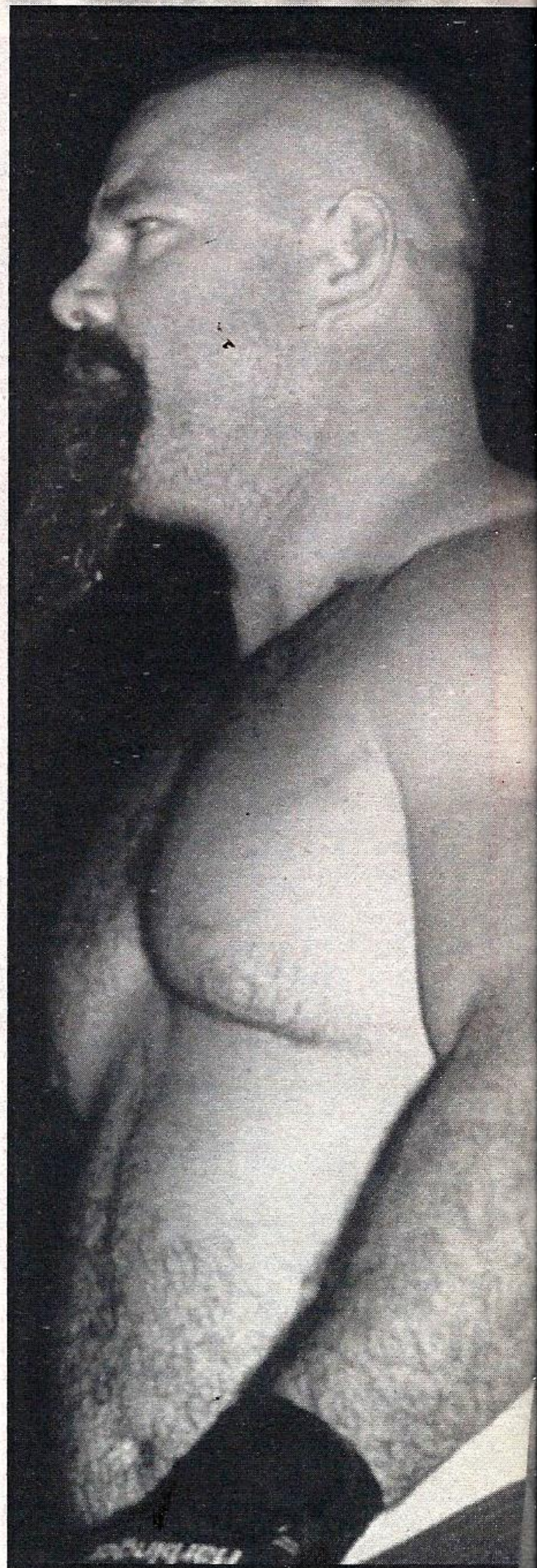
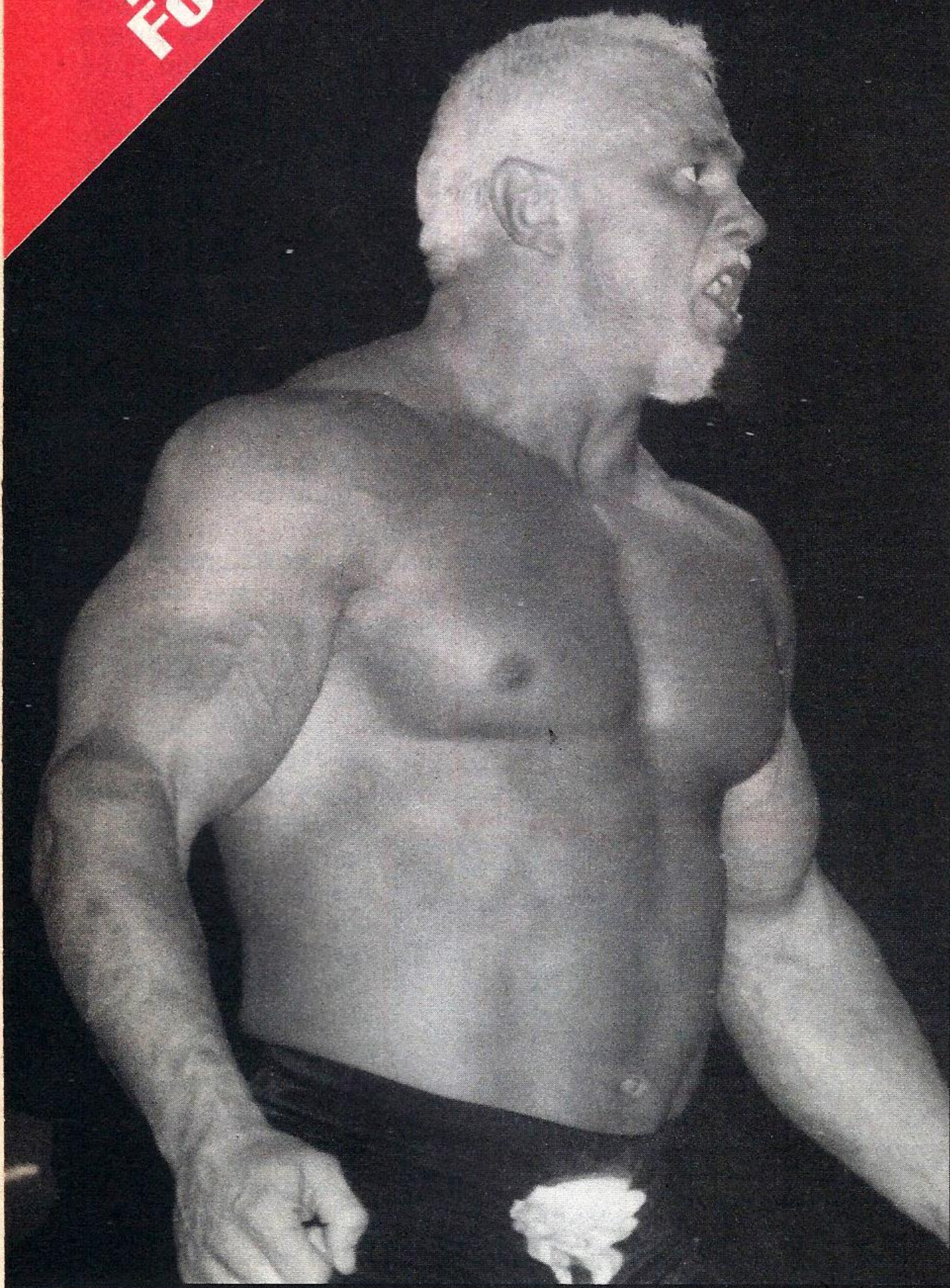


According to Guerrero, Chyna is a *mamacita* with desirable assets (below). She's pretty good at busting heads, too (above right).



THE
WRESTLER'S
Fearless
Forecast:

THE STEINER



By Harry Burkett

TANK ABBOTT and Scott Steiner are beating each other senseless in WCW, neither man willing to submit to the brutal onslaught of his foe. The intense rivalry pits a former UFC fighter against an admitted genetic freak.

When will it end?

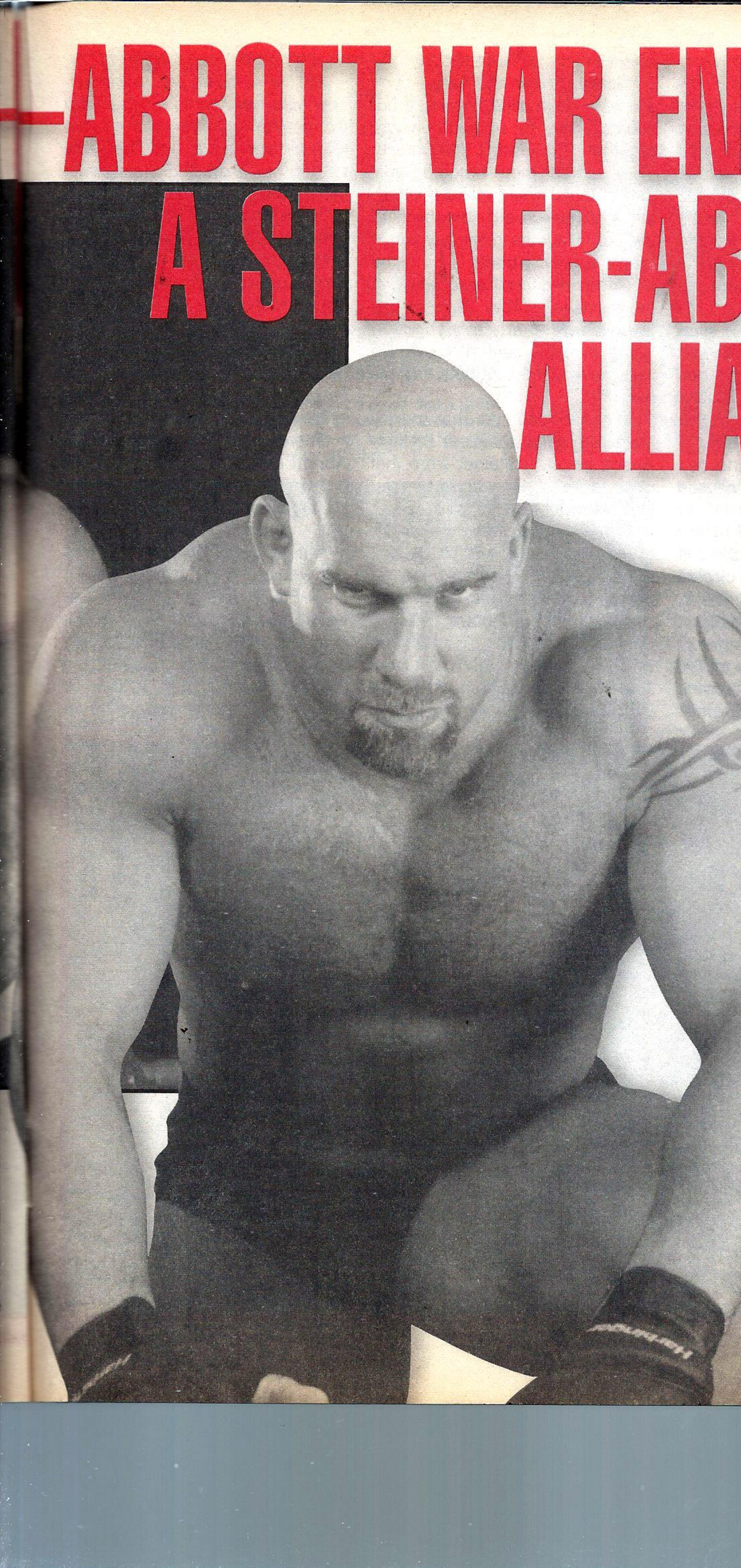
When Abbott and Steiner call a truce and join forces?

We know what most of you are thinking. You're laughing at us for acting as if this is a bold prediction. Tag team partners split and become bitter rivals. Hated enemies forget what they're feuding about, team

up, and go after someone else. It's the way this business works.

But how could the Abbott-Steiner conflict ever be resolved? Steiner threatened to physically harm the leaders of The New Blood, Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff. The thought of Steiner's pythons wrapping around their necks plague

—ABBOTT WAR ENDS IN A STEINER-ABBOTT ALLIANCE!



Tank Abbott has never faced a man as volatile as Scott Steiner. Likewise, Scott Steiner has never faced a man as rugged as Tank Abbott. They have many reasons to hate each other, but we're betting they hate Goldberg more

Russo and Bischoff during every waking and sleeping moment.

Tank Abbott is a mercenary sent to destroy "Big Poppa Pump" before he annihilates Vince and Eric with one solitary squeeze. Abbott, at the prodding of Russo and Bischoff, has gained the assistance of Scott's older brother, Rick. Tank Abbott and Rick Steiner have been allies in the past, going back to their feud with Sting a year ago.

Could Scott Steiner ever align himself with the thug who delivered a right-hand punch below his belt line ... from behind? Could Steiner reunite with the brother who smiled as he stomped him on the mat? Could he ever work for the two sniveling wimps who have caused him so much misery?

Nah!

Think again. Abbott and Scott Steiner ran in the same circles when Abbott first came to WCW. They were even good friends for a short time. A current member of The New Blood who spoke to THE WRESTLER on condition of anonymity believes an Abbott-Steiner

alliance is not so far-fetched.

"Scotty Steiner and Tank Abbott are very much alike," revealed our source. "They sat at the hotel bars together. They didn't drink much. They just sat there brooding until one of them would make a smart-aleck remark about somebody in the bar. Then the other guy would laugh quietly. Abbott is from the UFC, so he doesn't associate with the 'rasslers' in WCW. Steiner's had trouble with nearly everybody in WCW over the past 10 years. He hates everybody. Abbott was his only ally."

In some respects, that merely builds the case *against* a Steiner-Abbott union. If Steiner were that close to Abbott, how could he ever forgive him for the betrayal?

"There ain't no way I'd ever forgive that bald-headed geek," fumed Steiner. "He can bring his baggy pants and his taped fists over to the 'Big Poppa,' and I'll just knock his teeth down his throat. When I'm through, Tank Abbott won't be in WCW, the UFC, or anywhere else. He'll be in

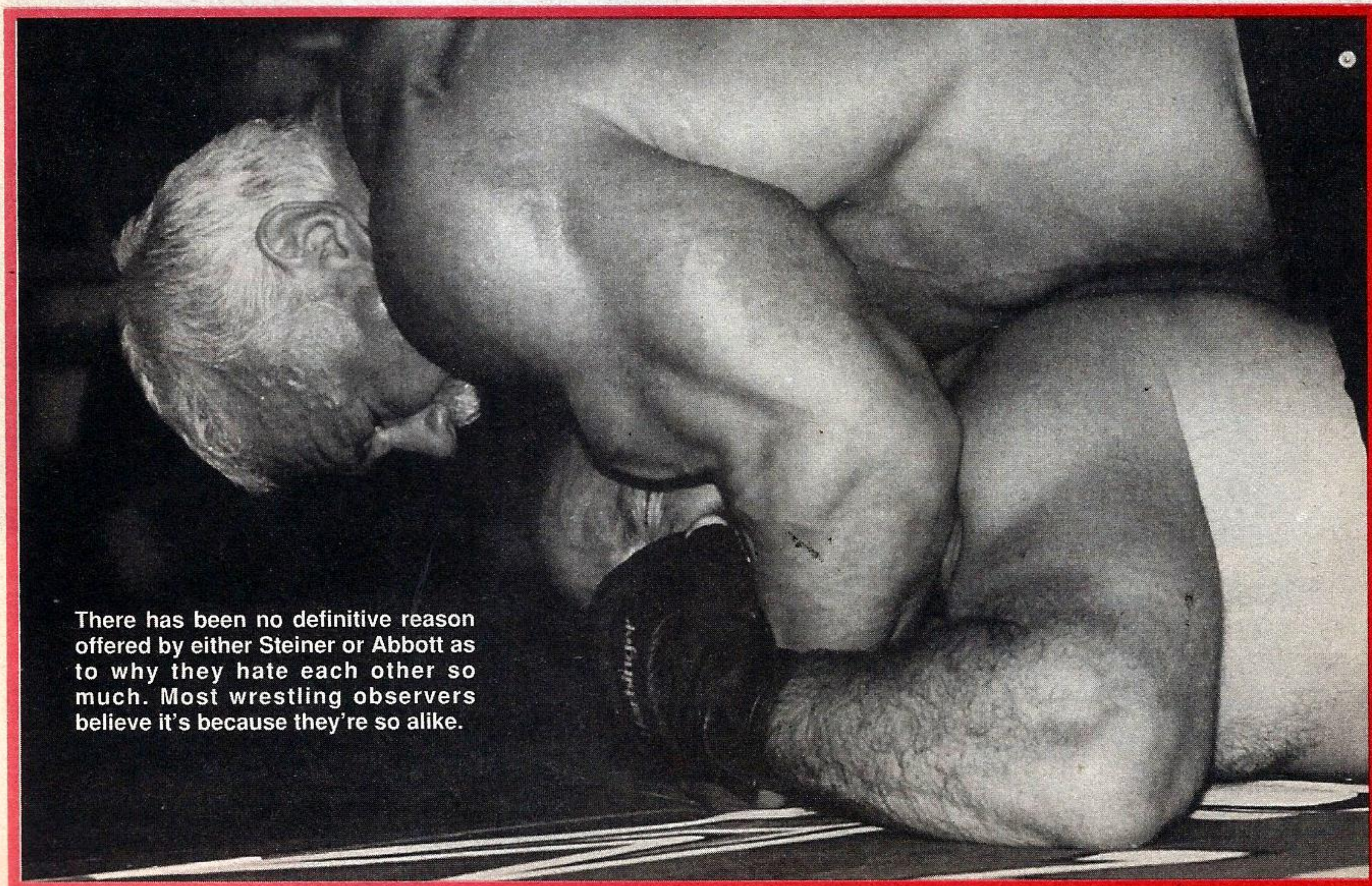
a rehab center for a long time."

Steiner is fueled by pure anger. Few men have dared to cross "Big Poppa Pump." Even fewer have lived to tell about it. And absolutely no one has assaulted Steiner with the ferocity of Tank Abbott.

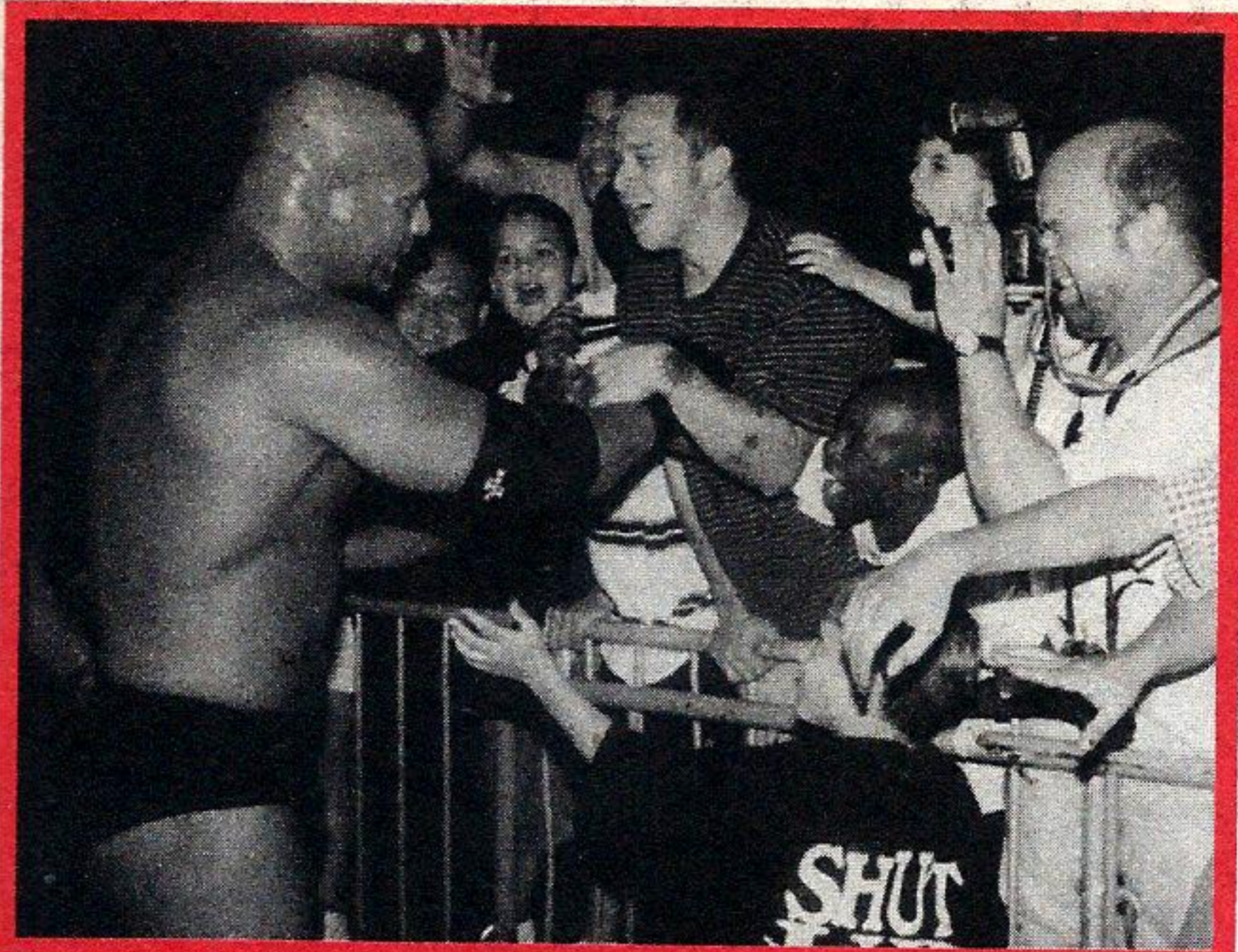
"I don't know who that swelled up musclehead thinks he is," mused Abbott. "I'll admit that Scott Steiner is the baddest *rassler* in all of WCW, but he still doesn't compare to a trained UFC fighter. What? Is he gonna suplex me? Is he gonna do one of those Frankensteiner things on me? Give me a break. In every single match, I've clobbered him."

There are bitter feelings between Abbott and Steiner now. But we believe the catalyst for an Abbott-Steiner alliance can be summed up in two words: Bill Goldberg.

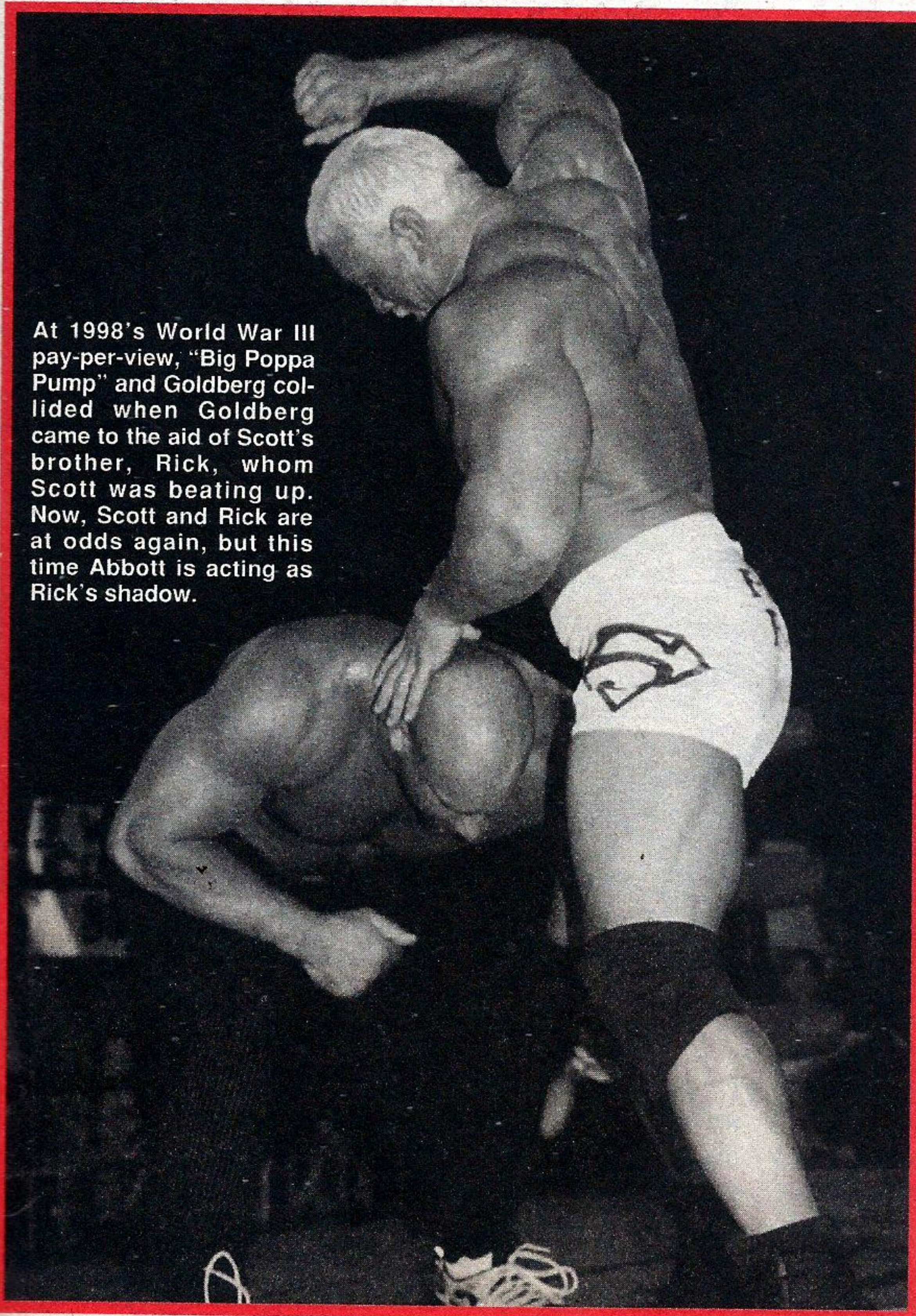
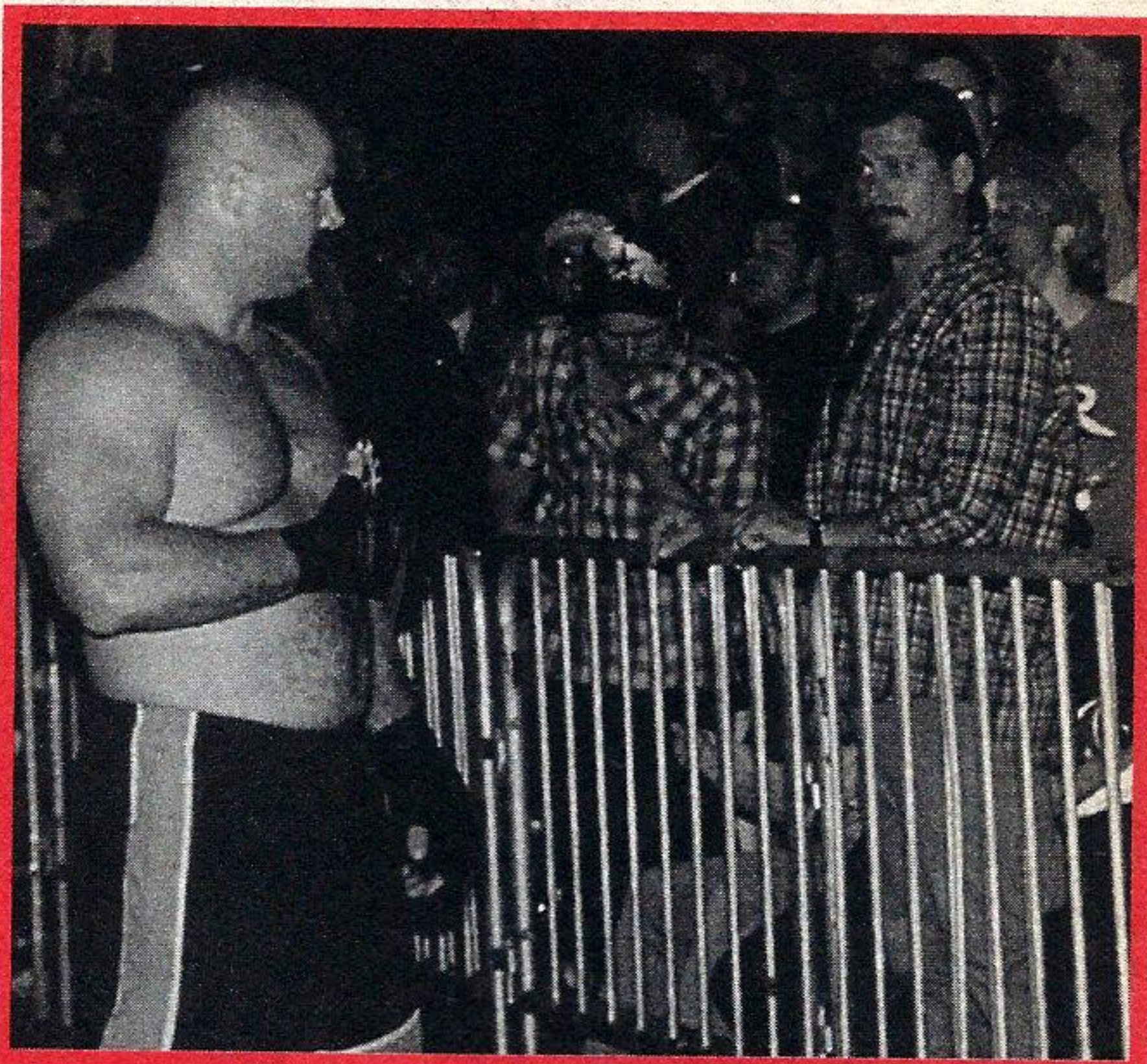
"The return of Goldberg changes the whole picture," continued our New Blood source. "Steiner believes this is his make-or-break time. He's in the prime of his career, and he's never quite reached the level of Sting, Hulk Hogan, or Goldberg. Rational people would



There has been no definitive reason offered by either Steiner or Abbott as to why they hate each other so much. Most wrestling observers believe it's because they're so alike.



Throughout his career, Bill Goldberg has never had a problem mingling with his fans (above). Whenever Tank Abbott gets near the ringside barrier, however, he looks like he's ready to introduce someone to his fist (right).



At 1998's World War III pay-per-view, "Big Poppa Pump" and Goldberg collided when Goldberg came to the aid of Scott's brother, Rick, whom Scott was beating up. Now, Scott and Rick are at odds again, but this time Abbott is acting as Rick's shadow.

see Goldberg simply as a professional target. Steiner's envy has turned to absolute hatred. It might not seem like it, but that's the real story."

Almost the same can be said about Abbott. Tank doesn't despise Goldberg with the same intensity, but he, too, in a cold, calculating manner, wants to eliminate him. Abbott didn't enter WCW just for a steady paycheck. He wants to dominate WCW, and nothing short of the total annihilation of Goldberg will accomplish that.

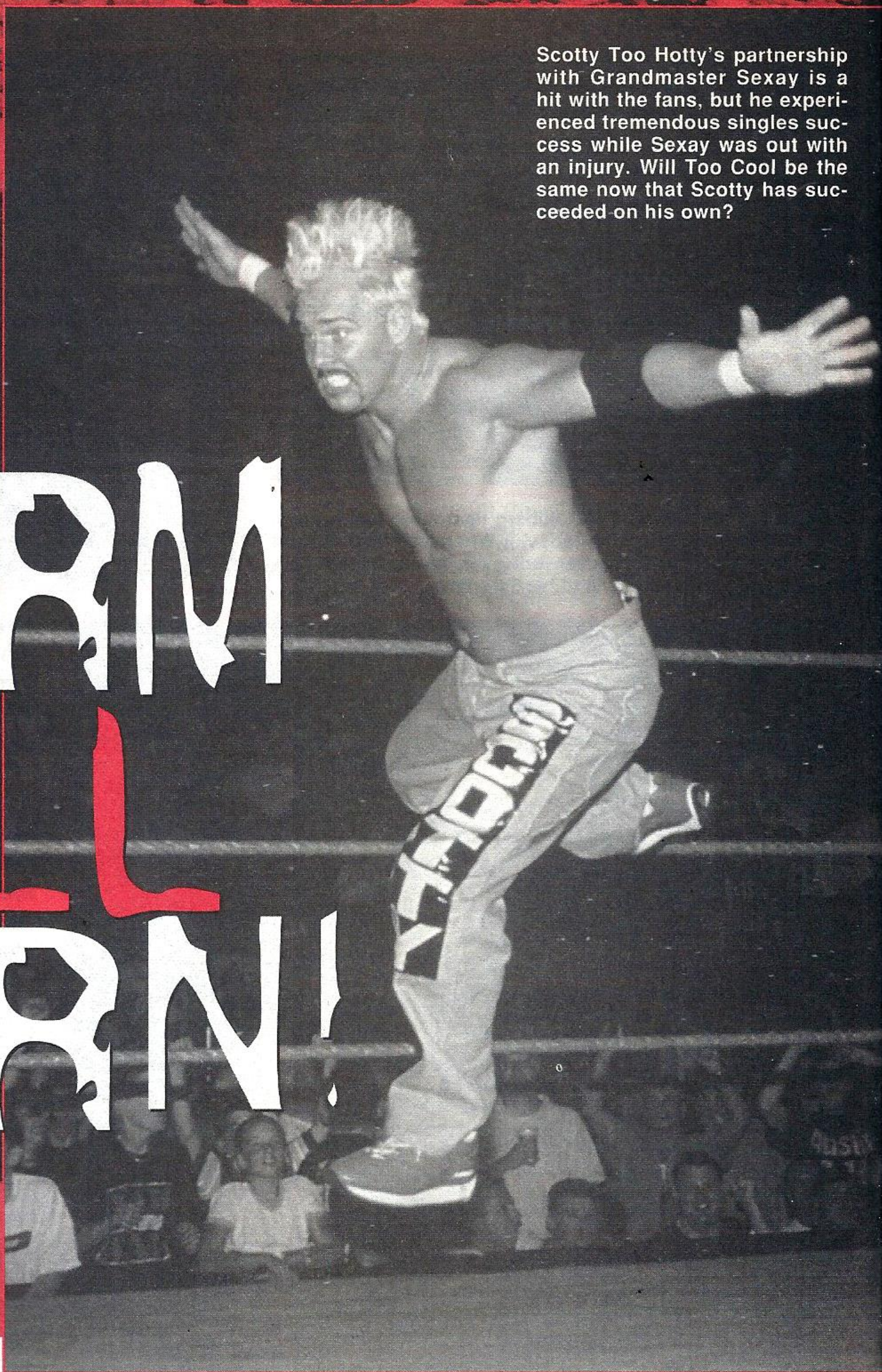
The question remains: Do Steiner and Abbott hate Goldberg more than they hate each other?

Most likely. Rather than risk defeat by doing it on their own, they could eliminate Goldberg together. Steiner might be willing to forgive his brother and the rest of The New Blood, at least temporarily, to complete the task. Then Steiner and Abbott could resume their feud—and a new WCW powerhouse would emerge.

Abbott and Steiner have been butting heads with no clear result. Neither man is playing to the fans. Neither man is capable of being friends with anyone. Perhaps those factors will foster some mutual respect—at least long enough for them to focus on Goldberg. In that battle, Abbott and Steiner will use the spears. □

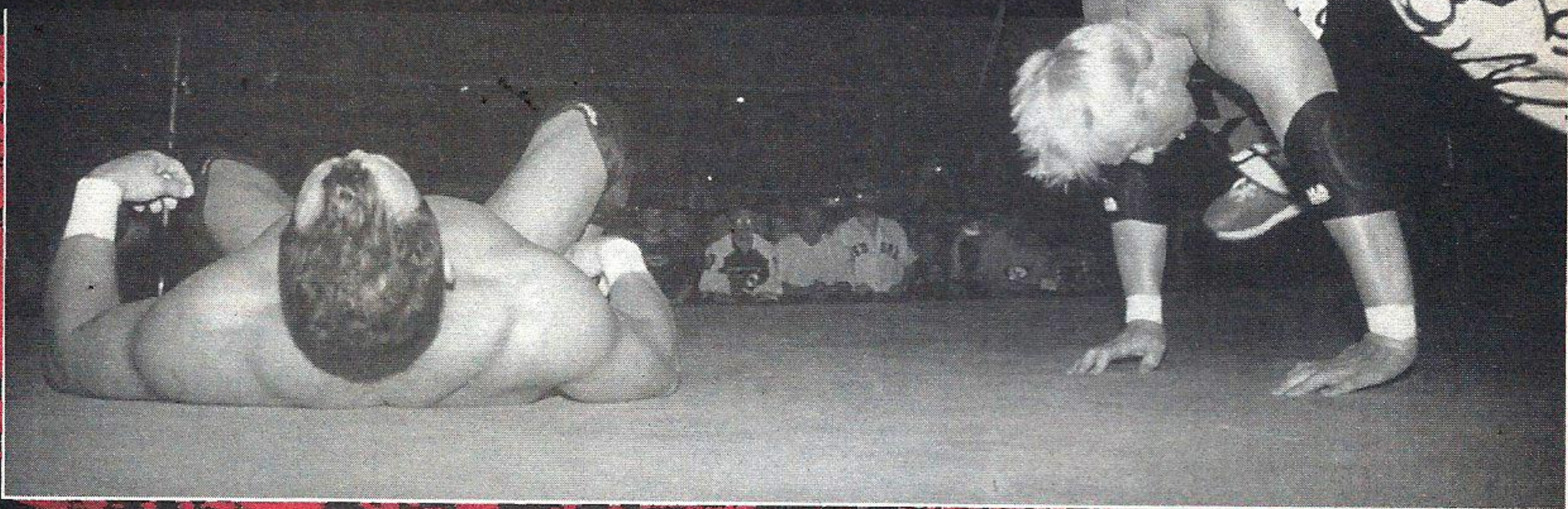
Scotty Too Hotty's partnership with Grandmaster Sexay is a hit with the fans, but he experienced tremendous singles success while Sexay was out with an injury. Will Too Cool be the same now that Scotty has succeeded on his own?

THE WORM WILL TURN!

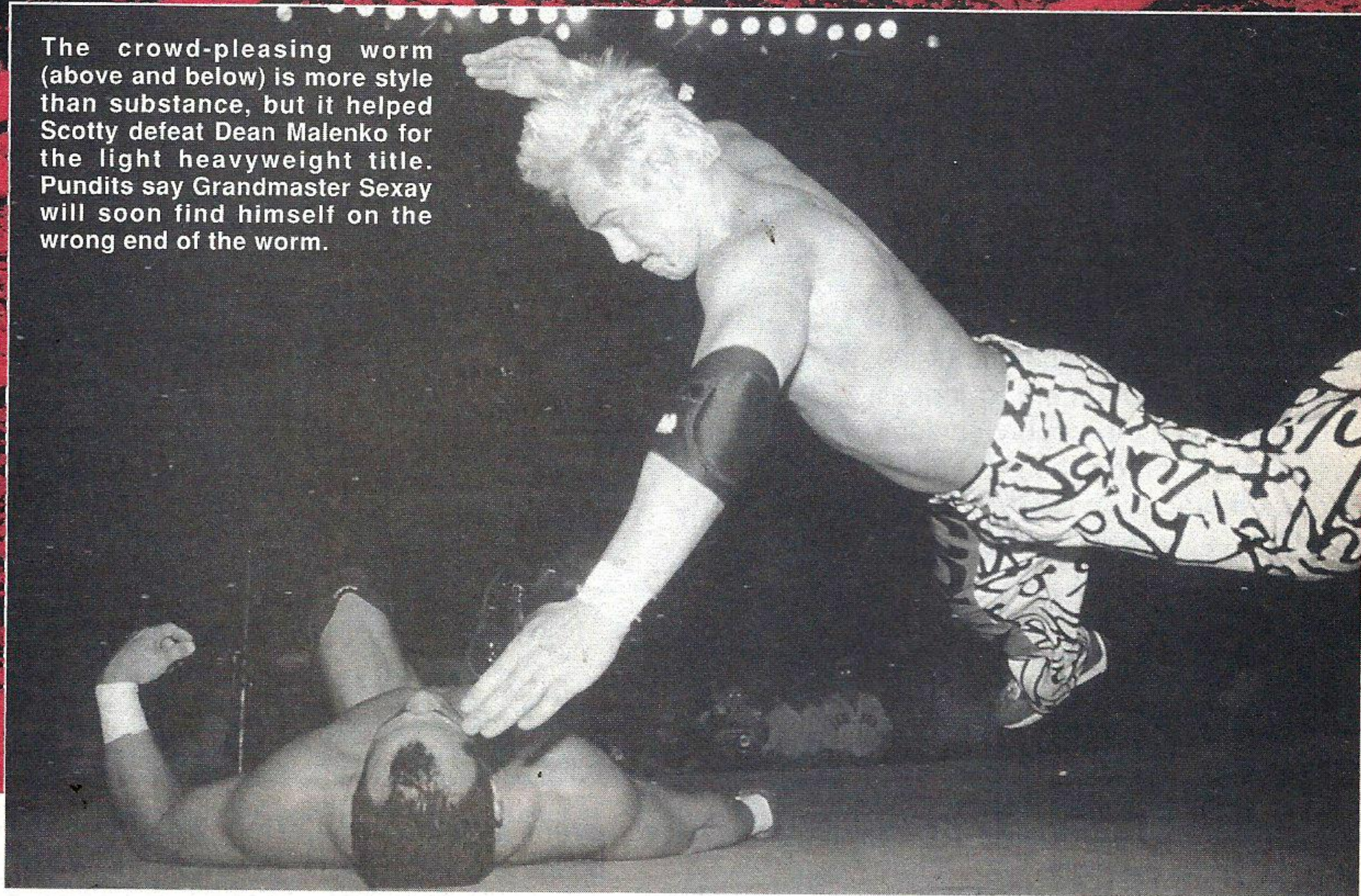


*Scotty's Too Hotty For
Grandmaster Sexay!*

FINDING a **WORM** USUALLY ISN'T a PLEASANT thing. FINDING that YOUR tag TEAM PARTNER is a **WORM** IS EVEN WORSE



The crowd-pleasing worm (above and below) is more style than substance, but it helped Scotty defeat Dean Malenko for the light heavyweight title. Pundits say Grandmaster Sexay will soon find himself on the wrong end of the worm.



By Dan Murphy

GRANDMASTER SEXAY'S INJURY couldn't have come at a worse time. After years of meaningless feuds and embarrassing losses, Brian Christopher and Scott Taylor, formerly known as Too Much, revamped their image and changed their name to Too Cool. They rode Rikishi's ample posterior to recognition and made a glorified version of the electric slide their ticket to tag team stardom.

After dominating matches against combinations of Dean Malenko, Perry Saturn, and Eddie Guerrero, Too Cool anticipated a series of WWF tag title shots.

Things looked great—until The Big Show put Grandmaster Sexay on the WWF's injured reserve list for five weeks on the night after WrestleMania.

Scotty didn't do anything wrong during the time his partner was out. The two stayed in touch daily and worked out together whenever possible. In fact, rather than take on a temporary partner in Sexay's place,



After years of mid-card mediocrity, Scott Taylor and Brian Christopher (below, knocking down Matt Hardy) finally gained attention as an entertaining team. Even Chris Jericho (left) has fallen under their hip-hop spell at times.

Scotty lobbied to have the tag matches that had already been scheduled changed to singles matches. All he wanted to do was stay sharp and keep the spotlight on Too Cool so he and Sexay could maintain the momentum they had built. Instead, he may have destroyed Too Cool's future.

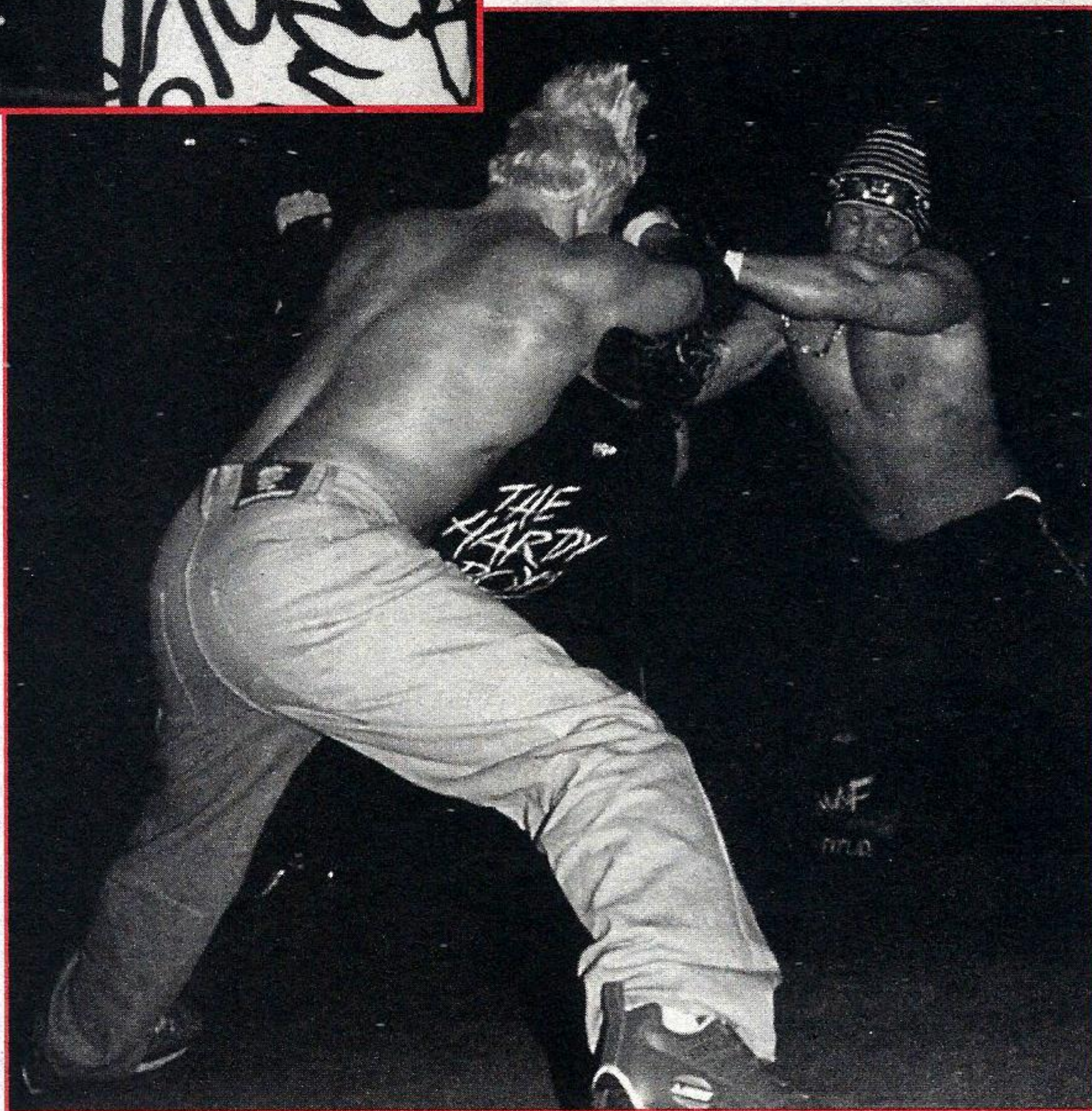
Nobody expected Scotty to beat Malenko for the light heavyweight title. After all, Malenko is the consummate *professional* wrestler—he knows the counters to the counters to moves Scotty Too Hotty probably couldn't even name, much less execute. Scotty's more comic relief. A terrific wrestler, yes, but still viewed by many as comic relief.

Or so Malenko—and many other observers—had thought. His initial win over Malenko and the superb match the two wrestled at Backlash went a long way toward getting people to look past the goofy hat, spiked hair, and exaggerated facial expressions. Too Hotty proved he could be a force in his own right.

Then his partner returned and it was right back to the comedy act.

Having regained the light heavyweight belt, Malenko went back to business as usual, too, and Chris Jericho and Chris Benoit put a monopoly on Intercontinental title shots. Was Scotty really supposed to go back to his team and just pretend the title win over Malenko never happened?

What do you do when you start to feel your partner is holding you back? What do you do when you think the fans have put a leash on your career? Nobody expects to see Scotty Too Hotty against The Rock in the main



event anytime soon. They want to see Too Cool boogeying with Rikishi. Give fans the worm, let them yell out the "Whoosh, whoosh" part, get your paycheck, and head home. That's all the fans seem to want from the former light heavyweight champ.

It doesn't take a genius to see where this situation is headed. The Worm is going to turn.

"You guys are always looking at successful tag teams and trying to stir up trouble," Scotty said recently. "Six months ago, the big rumor was that Christian was going to turn against Edge, and that obviously never happened. Three months ago, it was Jeff Hardy turning against Matt Hardy over the hardcore title. I guess it's our turn this

Does Scotty Too Hotty (flipping Eddie Guerrero) have what it takes to win a *major* WWF title? With the fans and Grandmaster Sexy in his corner, we might never find out.

Scotty has demonstrated the ability to hang with other young stars such as Jeff Hardy, but until he ditches Grandmaster Sexay, he will always be regarded as comic relief in the WWF.

month. Next you'll probably be saying Faarooq has had enough of Bradshaw's cheating at poker."

Though Scotty publicly scoffs at the notion, allow us to take a closer look at this situation. Aside from friendship (which, in wrestling, accounts for next to nothing), what does he stand to gain from his association with Sexay at this point? A tag title reign or two? And then what? Could Too Cool—or any team for that matter—put together a lengthy title reign given the level of competition in the tag ranks these days? What happens when the fans tire of the dancing and the "*whoosh-ing*"? Will Too Cool drop back to the mid-card level? Look at The Headbangers. They're former WWF tag champions and they've been stuck in matches against Kaientai and The Mean Street Posse for months.

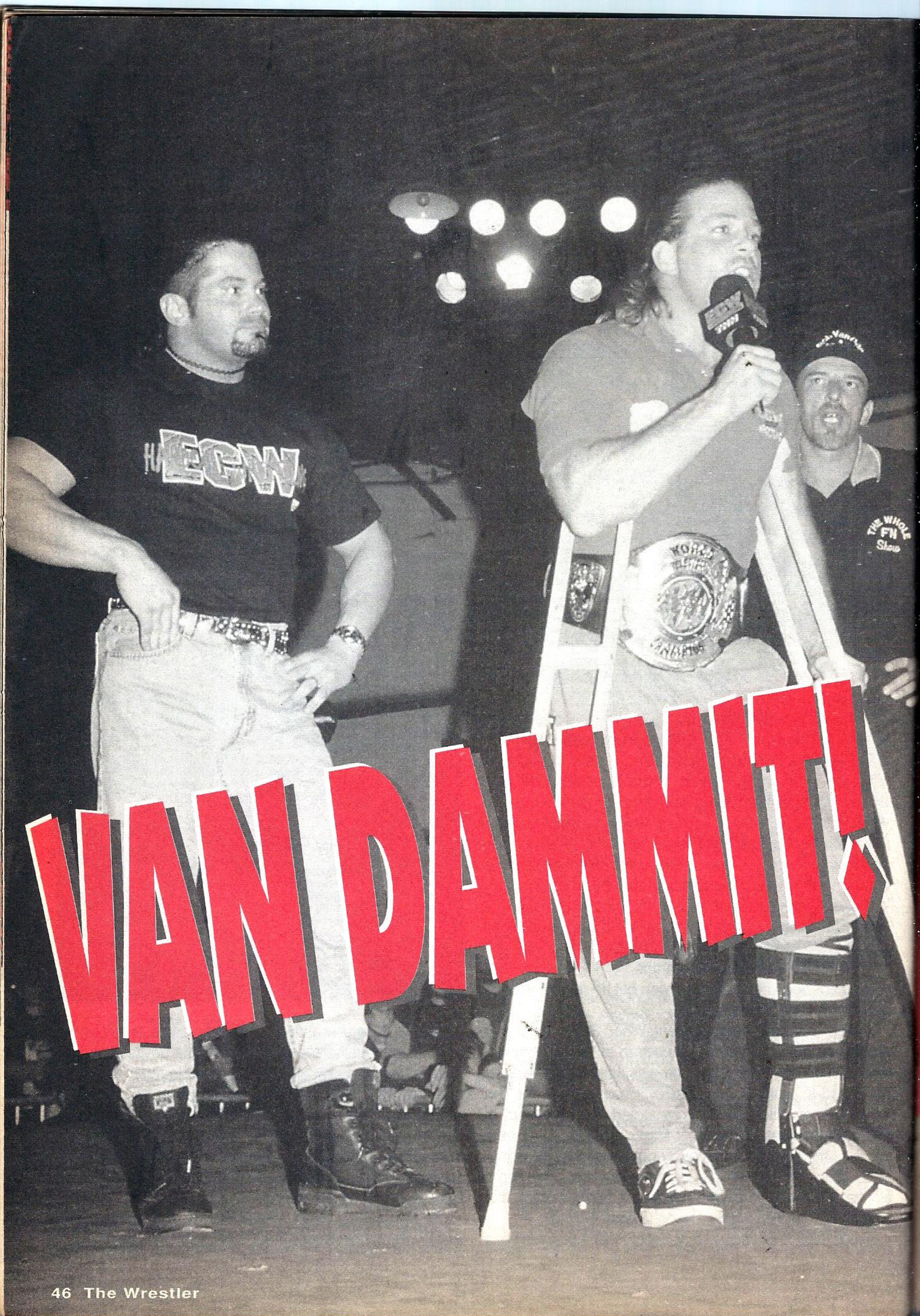
Scotty's been there, and you can bet he doesn't want to get back on that treadmill.

And then there's the precedent. When Scott Taylor was profiled in the "Introducing ..." column in this very magazine (December 1997 issue), he was asked what wrestler he hoped to emulate. His answer: Shawn Michaels. The same Shawn Michaels who struggled through years of mid-card matches with partner Marty Jannetty. The same Shawn Michaels who infamously put his partner through a plate glass window on the Brother Love set. The same Shawn Michaels who won just about every singles title available in the WWF after turning to rulebreaking.

Don't think for a second that Scotty hasn't noticed those

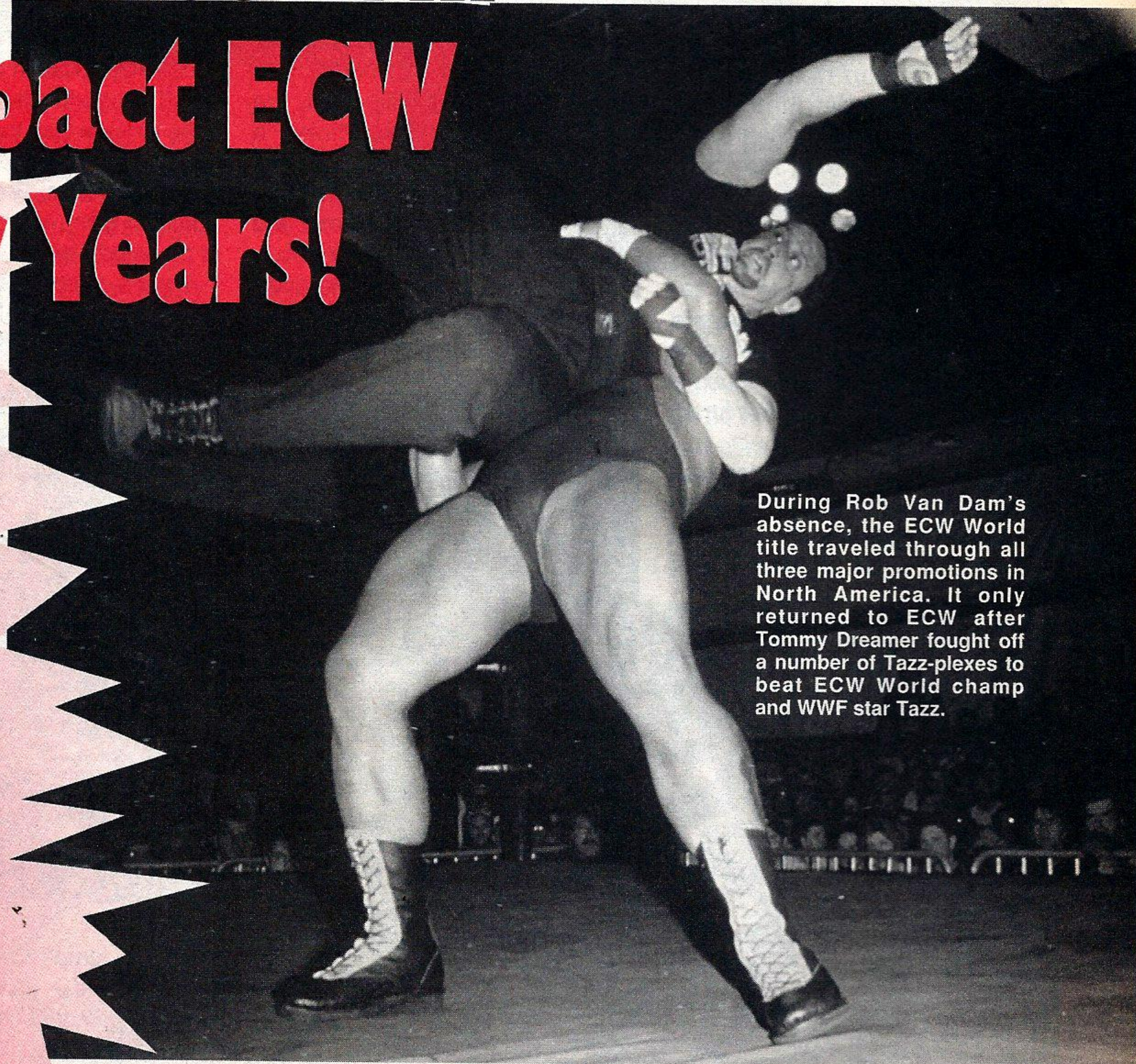
parallels. Sure, his worm maneuver gives the crowd a good laugh, but there's no dismissing the devastating bulldog he usually uses to set up the move in much the same way that The Rock uses the Rock bottom to set up the people's elbow. The Rock was able to package his tremendous athleticism with an updated Don Rickles routine and a grandstanding finisher to become "the most electrifying man in sports entertainment." What's to stop Scotty from doing the same?

Right now, it's Grandmaster Sexay. But don't expect that loyalty to hold Scotty Too Hotty back much longer. □



RVD'S It's hard to believe that one injury could **Four-Month** cause so many ripples, but the four **Absence Will** months RVD was out of action had dramatic effects on the entire promotion—and those effects are going to be felt for a long time to come

Impact ECW For Years!



During Rob Van Dam's absence, the ECW World title traveled through all three major promotions in North America. It only returned to ECW after Tommy Dreamer fought off a number of Tazz-plexes to beat ECW World champ and WWF star Tazz.

By Dan Murphy

A LOOK AT ECW's millennial fortunes had the gods of wrestling been Hollywood moviemakers: After surprising Tazz for the ECW

World title, Mike Awesome cuts a swath of destruction through the promotion, power-bombing all in his path through tables. As Awesome's manager, Judge Jeff Jones, grows ever more obnoxious, the

fans become more desperate for a hero. Enter Rob Van Dam, perhaps the most arrogant (and most popular) wrestler in ECW's history, and a man who (for one reason or another) has never gotten his shot at the

World title. In the ensuing dream match, Van Dam uses his speed and improvisation skills to counter Awesome's raw power and sadism. At stake is more than a world title; the winner becomes the star of ECW as it continues to gain a national audience.

It's a fantastic scenario. No matter who won, Awesome vs. Van Dam was the match the fans wanted to see. Unfortunately, the wrestling gods don't always go for the Hollywood ending. Unless, in this case, you love Justin Credible.

The move was about as basic a move as Rob Van Dam uses—a baseball slide under the bottom rope. Van Dam said his left ankle rolled under him during the move (executed during a January 29 match against Rhino), resulting in a fractured tibia. Van Dam has taken some brutal punishment in his career, but never before did he have to sit out for a four-month period of time. And if there was ever such a thing as a "good time" to get injured, this clearly wasn't it.

At first, most observers felt Van Dam's injury would only briefly delay his inevitable clash with Awesome. It even added some intrigue: Would

the injury affect Van Dam's style? Would RVD lose some stamina and get winded more quickly? Or would the four months of rest allow him to overcome nagging injuries and actually turn out to have a refreshing effect?

A big contract offer by WCW prevented us from finding out the answers to those questions.

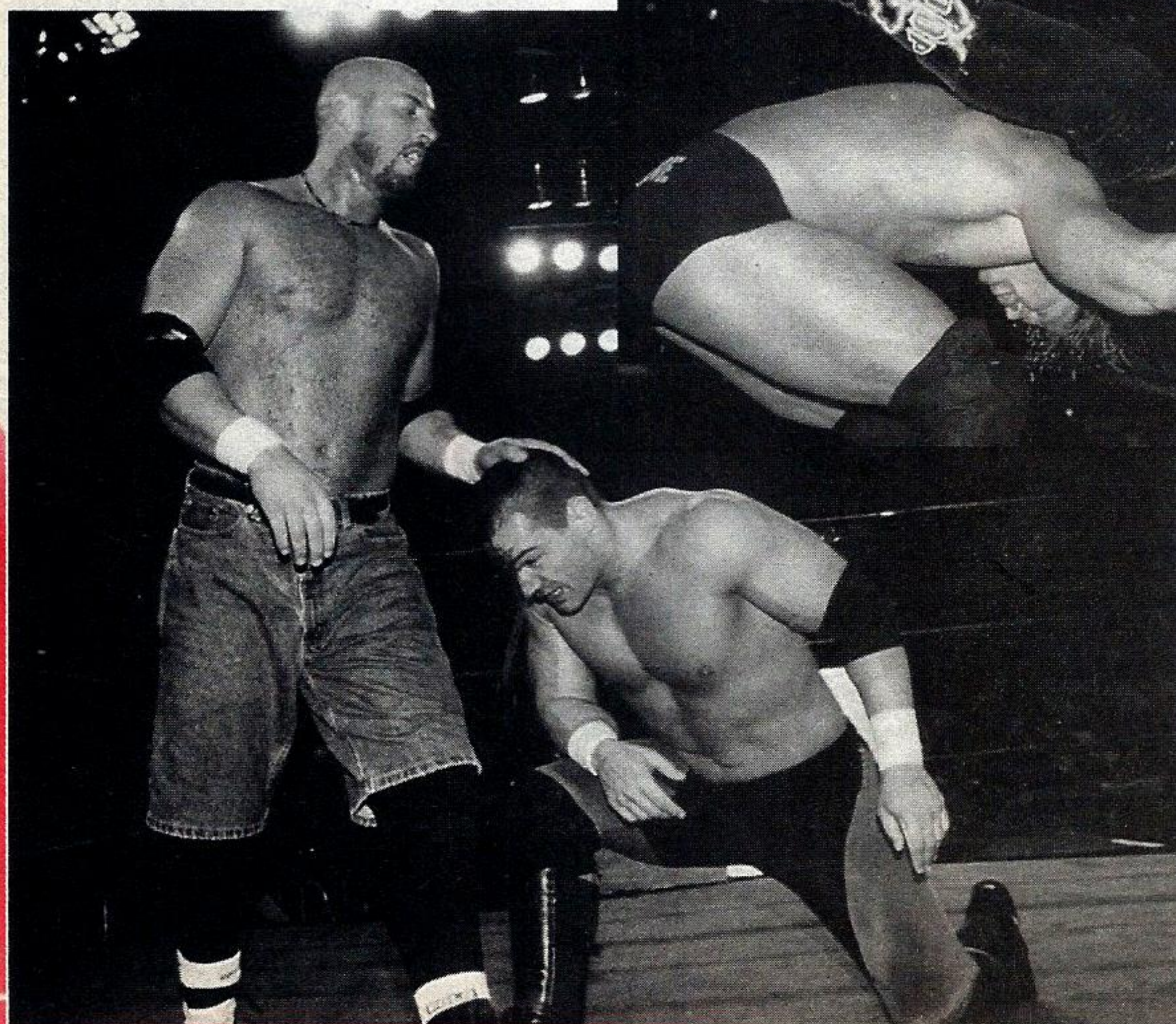
Mike Awesome unexpectedly jumped to WCW as ECW World champion. ECW needed to find a contender to win the strap and thus prevent Awesome from taking the belt out of the promotion. With almost two years as TV champion to his credit, Van Dam was clearly the top contender, but "The Whole F'n Show" couldn't go. Scanning the rest of the top contenders at the time (the injury-plagued Tommy Dreamer and Raven, the undersized Super Crazy and Yoshihiro Tajiri, and the overmatched Rhino, Kid Kash, and Little Guido), no single contender

emerged. In desperation, ECW owner Paul Heyman and Tazz worked out a deal, and the former World champion regained his title.

Of course, a WWF wrestler as ECW World champion was only slightly more palatable than a WCW wrestler holding the title hostage. From there the belt went to Dreamer, via his defeat of Tazz, and then immediately to Justin Credible, who now has a stranglehold on it. So at this crucial stage in ECW's development, the World champion is a brawler with an attitude who won the belt because of his valet's interference—not because of his own abilities. The World title changed hands three times in less than 30 days, and people are still wondering, *Between Awesome, Tazz, Dreamer, Credible, and Van Dam, who really deserves to be called the champion?*

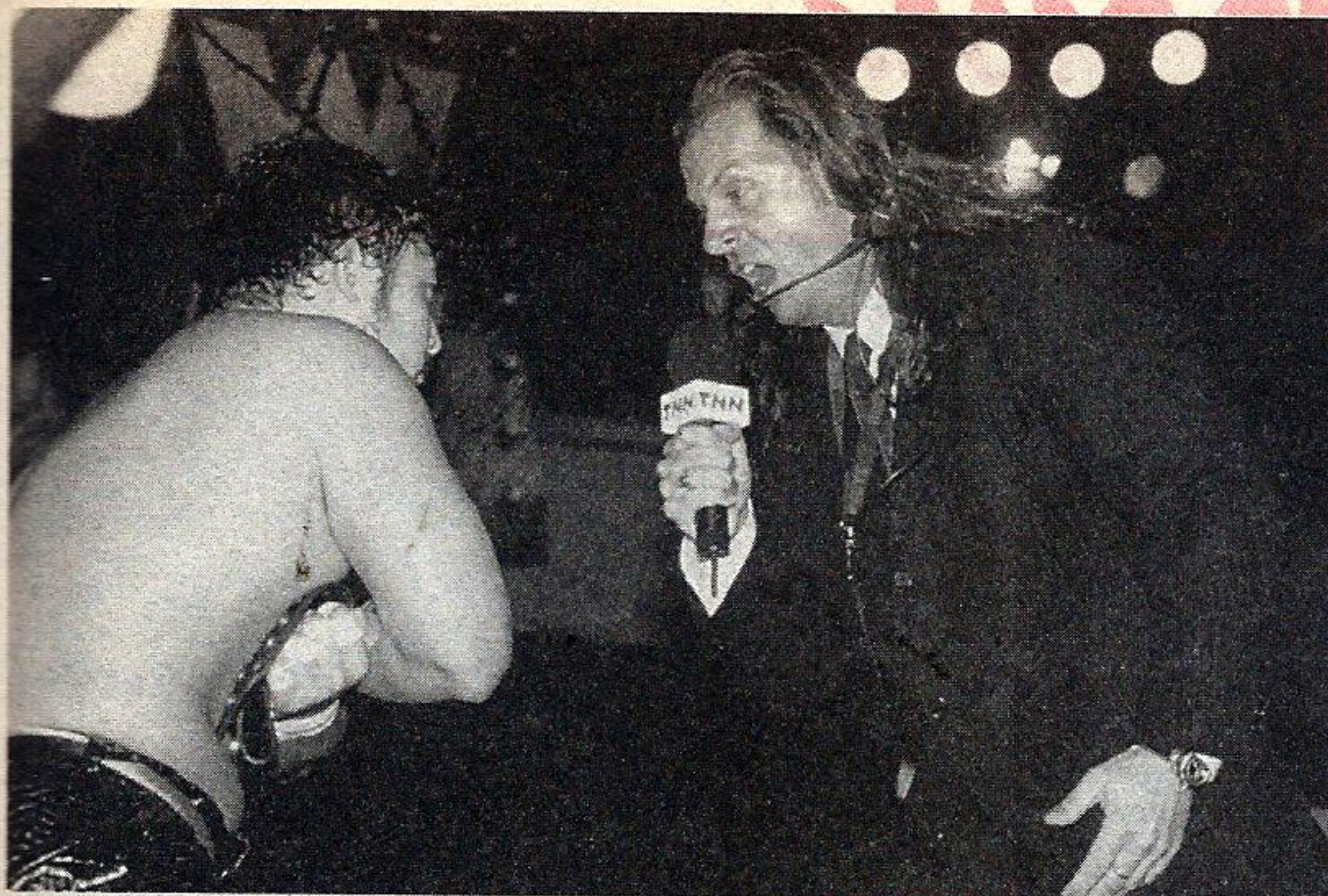
Here's another question: If Van Dam had never been injured, would Awesome still have been so

Mike Awesome (below) might not have jumped to WCW, and The Impact Players might not have broken up (bottom left) if it wasn't for Van Dam's injury. Lance Storm's jump to WCW only added to ECW's problems.

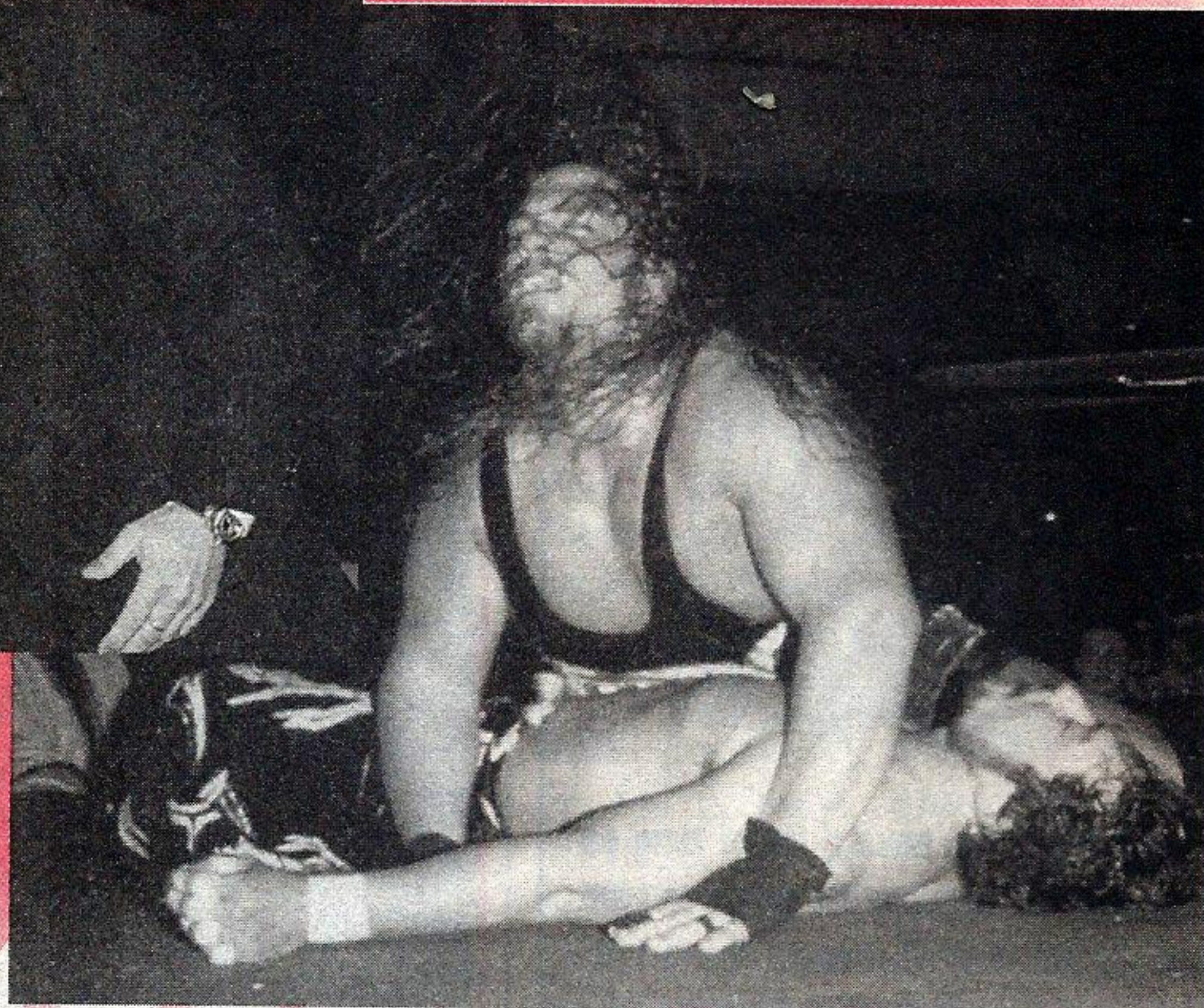


willing to jump? Or would a series against RVD have been a big enough personal challenge to keep him in ECW?

And then there's the TV title. Cyrus and The Network did what no ECW wrestler had been able to do when they got the TV belt off Van Dam's waist. Though Super Crazy and Tajiri temporarily foiled their plans, The Network was able to get the belt around Cyrus' chosen one,



After RVD was stripped of the TV title, the belt became The Network's play toy. Cyrus demanded that TV champ Yoshihiro Tajiri give the belt to Rhino (left), and when that didn't work, Rhino just beat Tajiri for it (below).



Rhino. Cyrus and Steve Corino degraded the belt RVD held in such high regard by making a mockery of the title match between Rhino and Tajiri and interfering liberally to ensure that Rhino would win.

Again, what if RVD was healthy? Van Dam has been the one man to truly dominate Rhino. Odds are Van Dam and Bill Alfonso could have turned away The Network's challenge and prevented Cyrus' crew from gaining such a strong foothold in ECW. And what about the match-

es we missed? Lengthy series between Van Dam, Tajiri, and Super Crazy with the TV title on the line!

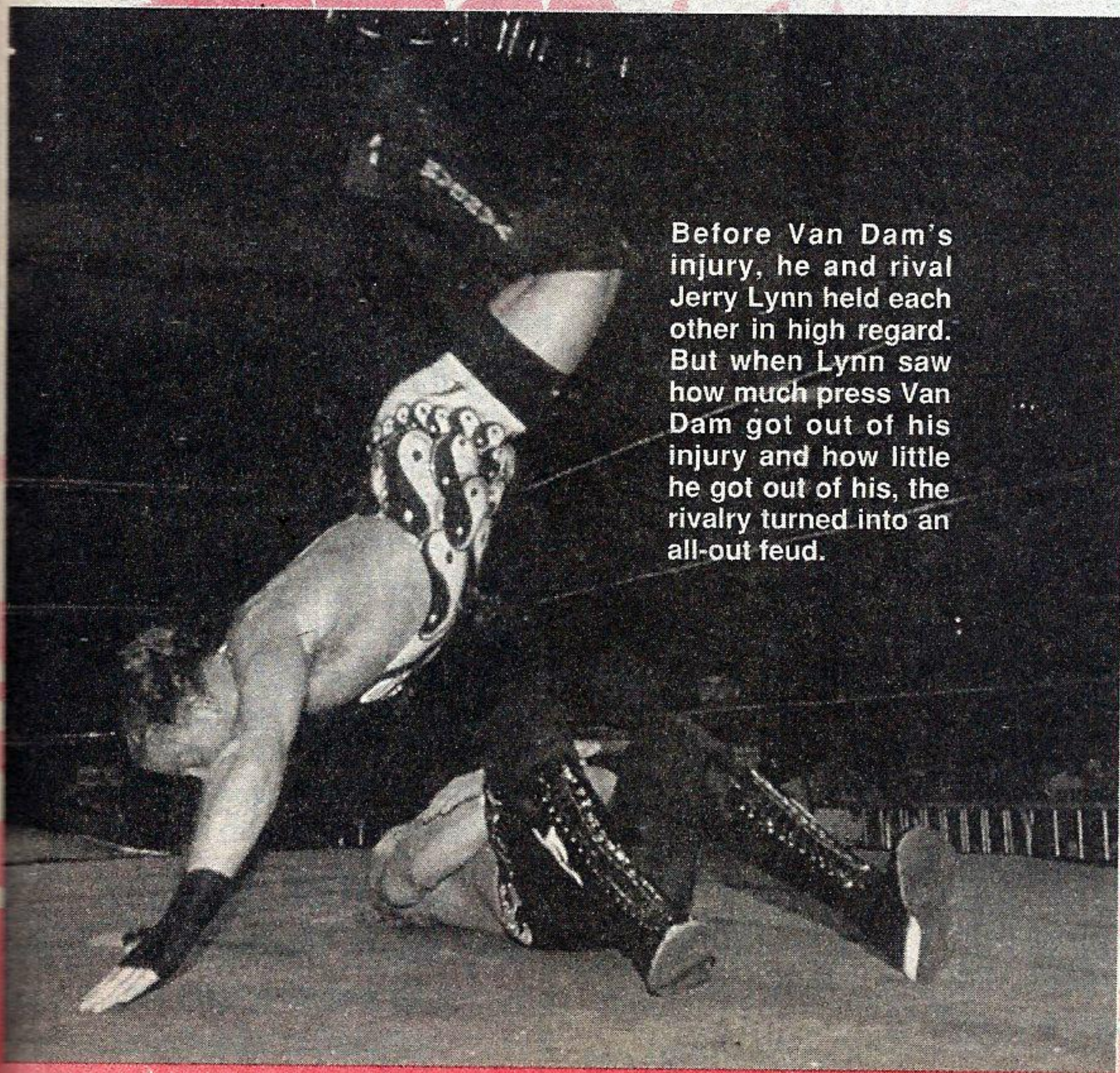
Then there's Jerry Lynn. Lynn adopted his new rulebreaking attitude because he claimed he was in Van Dam's shadow, even when

injured. The fans cared more about Van Dam and his comeback than they did about Lynn and his. Or so he claimed. Now Lynn, who had always succeeded by focusing his quiet intensity, has forsaken the fans and is focused on cementing his reputation as "The New F'n Show."

And how about Scotty Anton? If Anton didn't have to act as RVD's de facto bodyguard over those four months, would he still harbor the resentment that manifested itself in a rulebreaking turn at Hardcore Heaven?

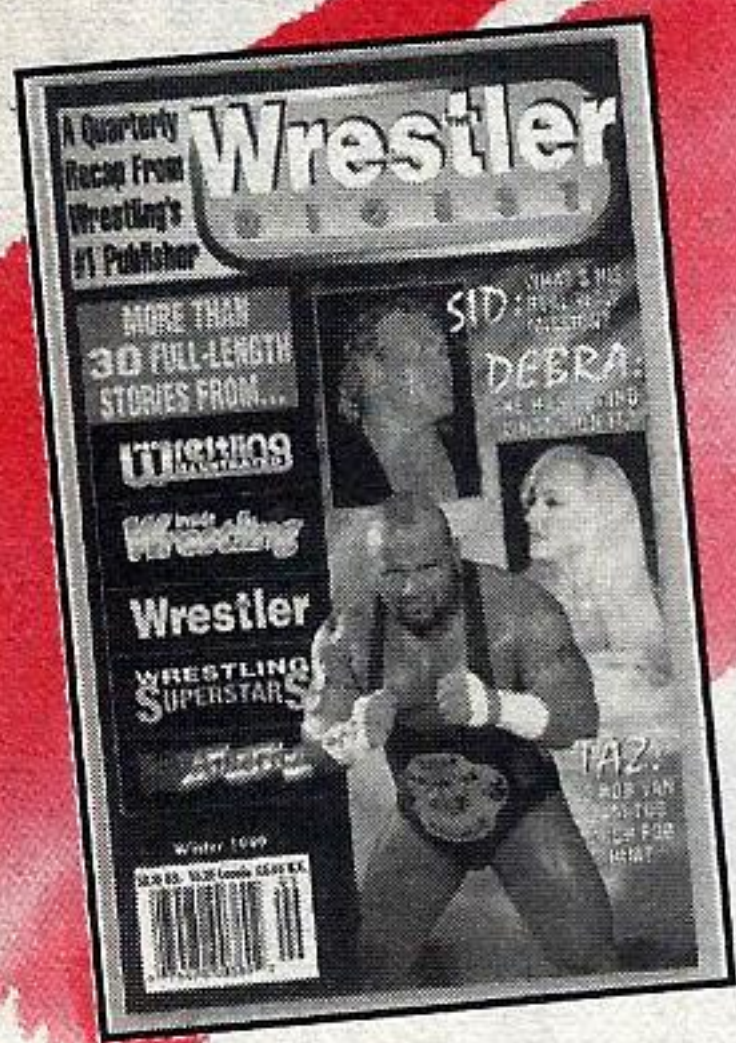
What of Lance Storm? Now in WCW with Awesome, he only split with Credible after Credible denounced the ECW World tag team title to go after Dreamer's World title. Money aside, it's hard to imagine Storm leaving ECW as one-half of the World tag team champions.

Van Dam is back in action, but he's not where he was when he was injured. In fact, the entire promotion isn't where it was in January. Whether Van Dam unseats Justin Credible for the World title or not, ECW will feel the effects of that awkward baseball slide for years to come. □



Before Van Dam's injury, he and rival Jerry Lynn held each other in high regard. But when Lynn saw how much press Van Dam got out of his injury and how little he got out of his, the rivalry turned into an all-out feud.

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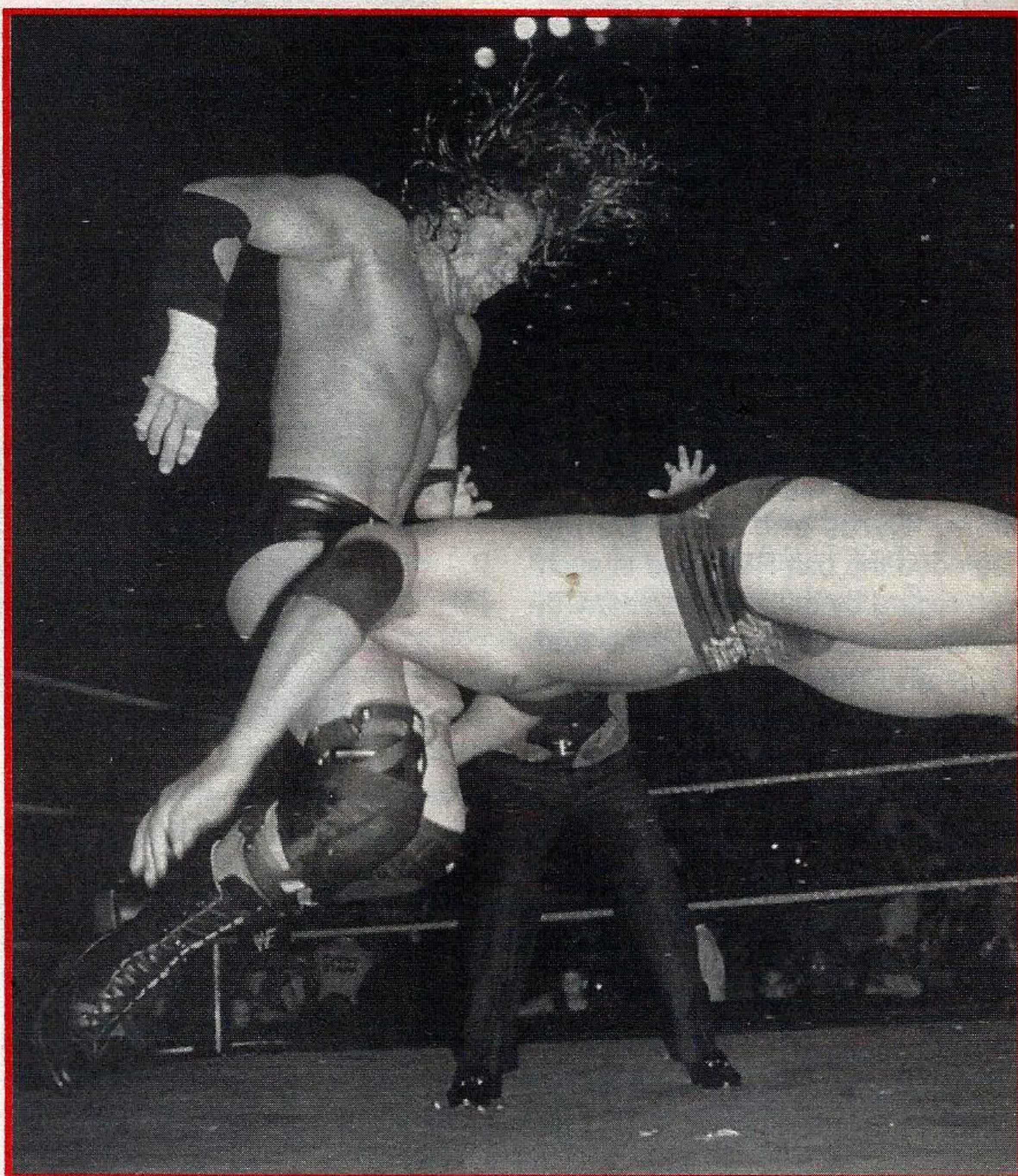
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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



As talented as Triple-H is, some WWF fans are beginning to tire of his ubiquitous presence on *Raw* and *Smackdown*. Now that he is no longer WWF champ, will we see less of him on TV?

24 hours a day! This network should not be run by Time Warner or by the WWF, but by an independent company that has no agenda. WWF, WCW, and ECW should be on this network, as well as many independent telecasts from Mexico or Japan. You could also see matches from defunct organizations like the AWA and the USWA.

I think a network like this should be made available and would be great for wrestling fans, because if there is one thing that every wrestling fan needs, it's the chance to watch more wrestling.

bigdaddy@gis.net

TOO MUCH HHH

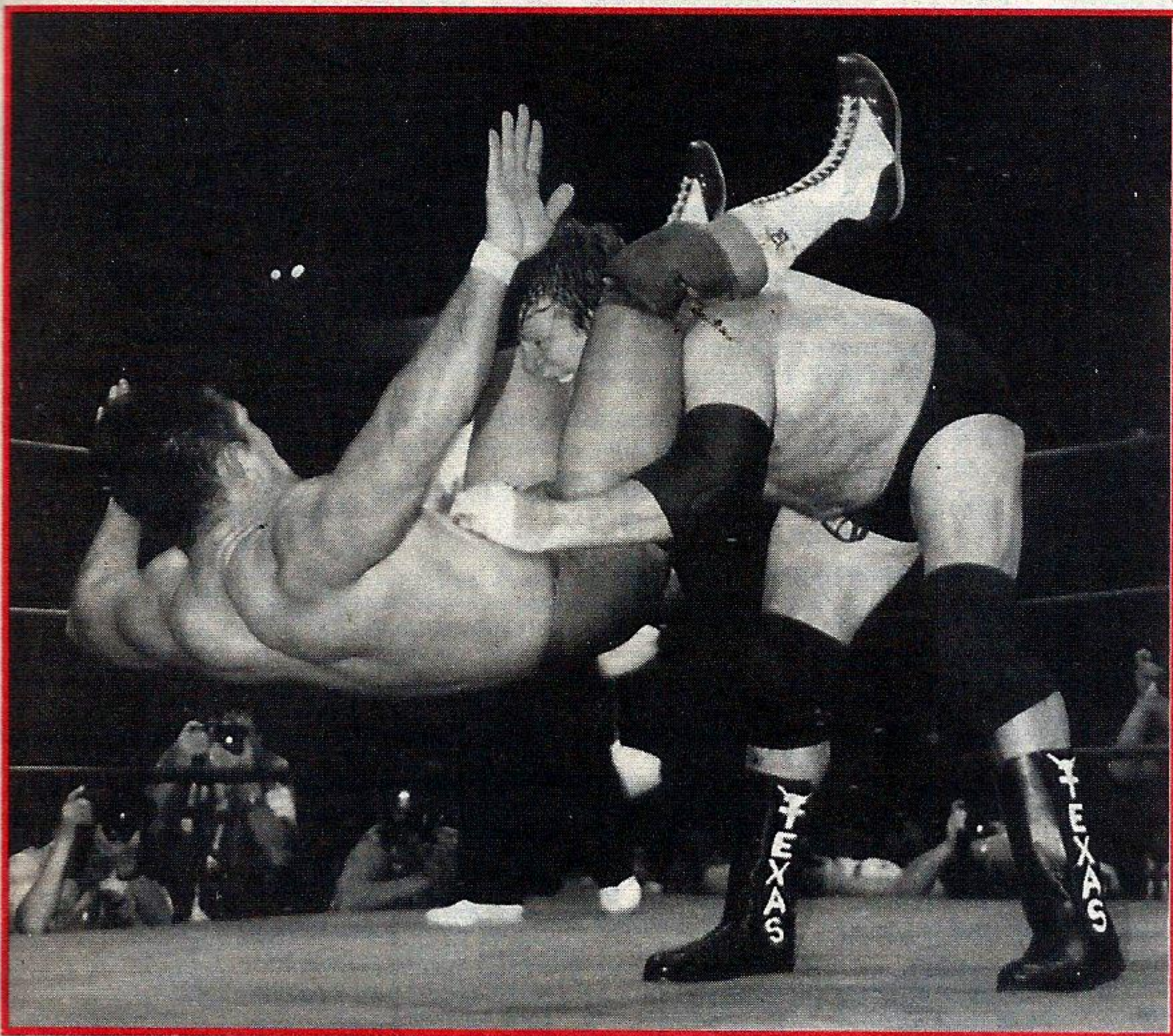
Even though I consider Triple-H to be the Most Improved Wrestler of the Year, I am disappointed that practically every WWF show begins and ends with him. I enjoy watching him on *Raw* and *Smackdown*, but I am beginning to think that there is too much of him on TV. He deserves the exposure, but it's getting to be too much.

VICKIE SHEIN
Richmond, VA ☐

Send YOUR LETTERS to:
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Or e-mail letters to:
yourletters@aol.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)



Rugged veteran Stan Hansen (power-bombing Akira Taue) has been teaming with Erik Watts in All-Japan Pro Wrestling. Hansen has been impressed by Watts' toughness.

crossface, but a slimmed down Regal put on one of his best matches in years, prompting Benoit to give him his due over the house microphone at the end of the match. In other results: "Rapid Delivery" Rory Fox and "The Future" Logan Caine beat Jet Jaguar and Jeremy Lopez; B.J. Payne beat Rico Constantino; Chuck Palumbo beat Sean O'Hare; Scotty Sabre defeated Reckless Youth; Cody Hawk and Mad Anthony McMurphy beat Flash Flanagan and Matt Stryker; Shark Boy defeated Jamie-San; Race Steele defeated Chip Fairway; McMurphy beat Cody Michaels; Tim Horner defeated Tom Prichard in a battle of veterans; Ron and Don Harris beat Disco Inferno and Kidman; Justin Credible beat Raven; and Vampiro defeated Captain Rection (and I

always thought **Hugh Morrus** was a stupid name). The event reportedly raised \$36,000.

Here's a team I never thought I'd see: **Erik Watts** and **Stan Hansen**. That odd couple lost an All-Japan match to **Takao Omori** and **Yoshihiro Takayama** on May 25 in Iwate, Japan. The pairing's not as unlikely as it might seem, Hansen says. "Watts is a tough kid who's paid his dues," Hansen gruffly spat during a recent telephone interview. "His old man was a tough S.O.B., too. Give me a little more time with the kid, and maybe I'll turn him into the next **Bruiser Brody!**" Hey, **Johnny Ace** left a stint as a Dynamic Dude alongside **Shane Douglas** in the U.S. and developed into one of Japan's most respected competitors, so the precedent has been set.

WCW has announced plans

for a brief tour of Australia in October. A *Nitro* taping is tentatively set for October 2 in Brisbane, while a *Thunder* taping is slated to be held October 9 in Melbourne.

Finally, Japanese wrestling legend **Jumbo Tsuruta** died on May 13 following kidney transplant surgery. Tsuruta, 49, was an accomplished amateur wrestler and was trained for a career in pro rings by **Shohei "Giant" Baba** and **Terry and Dory Funk Jr.** He is best remembered in the U.S. for winning the AWA World title in 1984, and he also beat Stan Hansen to become the first All-Japan Triple Crown champ in 1989. He is survived by his wife, **Yasuko**, and three children.

That's what's happening this month. Catch ya in 30. □



Jumbo Tsuruta died at the age of 49 on May 13 in the Philippines. Aside from being a former AWA World and NWA International tag team champion, Jumbo was an outstanding Olympic wrestler.

NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

born from the old NWA, but because WCW makes a point to ignore that fact most of the time, the point is moot. And because the leadership of WCW has changed so many times, there has been no continuity within the promotion. Every time the fans start to feel comfortable with the product WCW puts out, another leadership change occurs, leaving fans to wonder what happened to the promotion they had been watching over the past couple of months.

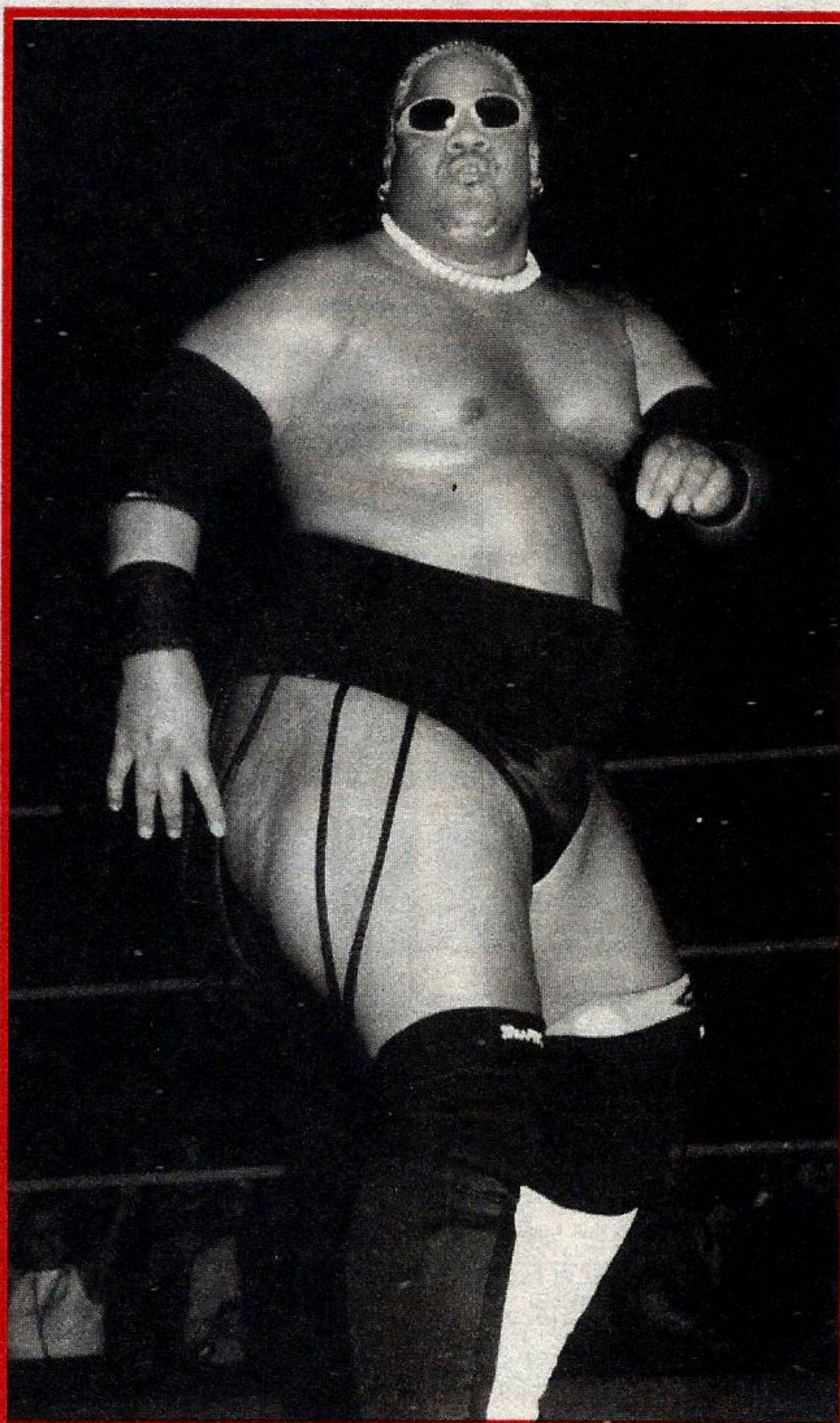
And there are other factors that have helped to separate WCW from its past:

—The influx of WWF stars like Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage, and the subsequent centering of the promotion around them, almost forced fans to look at WCW as a kind of reformed WWF.

—The appalling treatment of Ric Flair, who in essence was the embodiment of everything NWA, by Eric Bischoff during the NWO's historic run, alienated many fans who were still looking for a trace of the NWA in WCW.

The WWF, on the other hand, has no such problems. It traces its history back to 1963, back to when a group of wrestling promoters in the Northeast broke away from the NWA to form the World Wide Wrestling Federation. And because the promotion has never changed names—beyond the loss of one “W”—or owners (unless you count the shift from Vince Sr. to Vince Jr.), the WWF has a relationship with wrestling fans that WCW simply cannot have.

Wrestling fans remember back to when a young Vince McMahon



The rotund Rikishi Phatu is one of the most popular wrestlers in the WWF, but would he be as popular if he were in WCW and doing exactly what he now does in the WWF?

Jr. handled the WWF's play-by-play. They watched McMahon grow both physically (remember how short he looked while interviewing Andre the Giant?) and professionally (under Vince, the WWF changed from a small, regional promotion into a global, billion-dollar business), and a lot of wrestling fans were cheering him every step of the way. The WWF is the brand name in wrestling.

Then you have WCW. Like the WWF, WCW is also led by a former announcer, Eric Bischoff. But wrestling fans haven't known Bischoff for all that long, and they

certainly don't have memories of him from their childhoods. So even though Bischoff has been around wrestling for the last 15 years, he's still a stranger to wrestling fans, and they don't trust him with their time quite yet.

That is not to say wrestling fans completely trust McMahon. The early-'90s proved that. Once the steroid scandal left McMahon reeling and in need of a wholesome product to sell to the American public, wrestling fans dropped the WWF faster than you can say “Doink the Clown.” But once time had distanced the WWF from the scandal and once the WWF began adding a little attitude to its product, wrestling fans returned to WWF arenas everywhere—and they came back in massive numbers.

It's true, WCW and the success of the New World Order are largely responsible for making wrestling popular again, but you have to remember that even at the peak of the

NWO's popularity, *Nitro*, on average, was only drawing ratings in the high 4s. Right now, *Raw* is commonly drawing ratings in the high 6s. Granted, some of the viewers responsible for *Raw*'s current ratings were previously *Nitro* viewers. But also contributing to *Raw*'s impressive ratings are new fans and lapsed fans. And while WCW has the same ability to draw new fans, it doesn't have the lapsed fan base the WWF has.

If it did, Ernest Miller—and not Rikishi Phatu—would be one of the most popular stars in sports entertainment today. □

YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

my duties as a full-time commissioner," Michaels said. "I was too busy running the Texas Wrestling Alliance and raising my son, Cameron, to stay on top of things in the WWF. Lots of changes took place in the WWF while I was back home in San Antonio, and many of those were bad developments as far as I'm concerned. For example, had I been a full-time commissioner, this whole McMahon-Helmsley Regime thing would have never gone down. As I pointed out on *Raw*, I feel directly responsible for that. I allowed it to happen on my watch, and it's had some unfortunate results for the WWF. But don't worry, Eileen, HBK will still be around to stir the pot, even if it's just now and then."

...

Q: "I have a question for Rick Steiner: Rick, why have you taken Tank Abbott's side in his feud with your brother? I thought the Steiners were going to make a comeback as a tag team."—Jeff Cottier, New Orleans, LA

A: "First of all, Scott's a no-good, two-bit punk," said "The Dog-faced Gremlin." "Second of all, I'll never forget the way he and Buff Bagwell attacked me over and over again when they were with the NWO. I tried to reach out to Scottie when he was hurt, time after time, and he repayed me by humiliating me every chance he and Bagwell could get. I forgave Scott for what he did to me more times than a brother ought to. I got tired of looking like a fool, so I swore to myself that someday, when my brother got back on his feet, I would find a way to repay the favor, and that's what I'm doing right now. Tank Abbott is much more reliable than Scottie ever was. That's why anybody who's waiting for me and my brother to come back as a team can forget about it. It's never gonna happen." □

Send your questions to:
YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER
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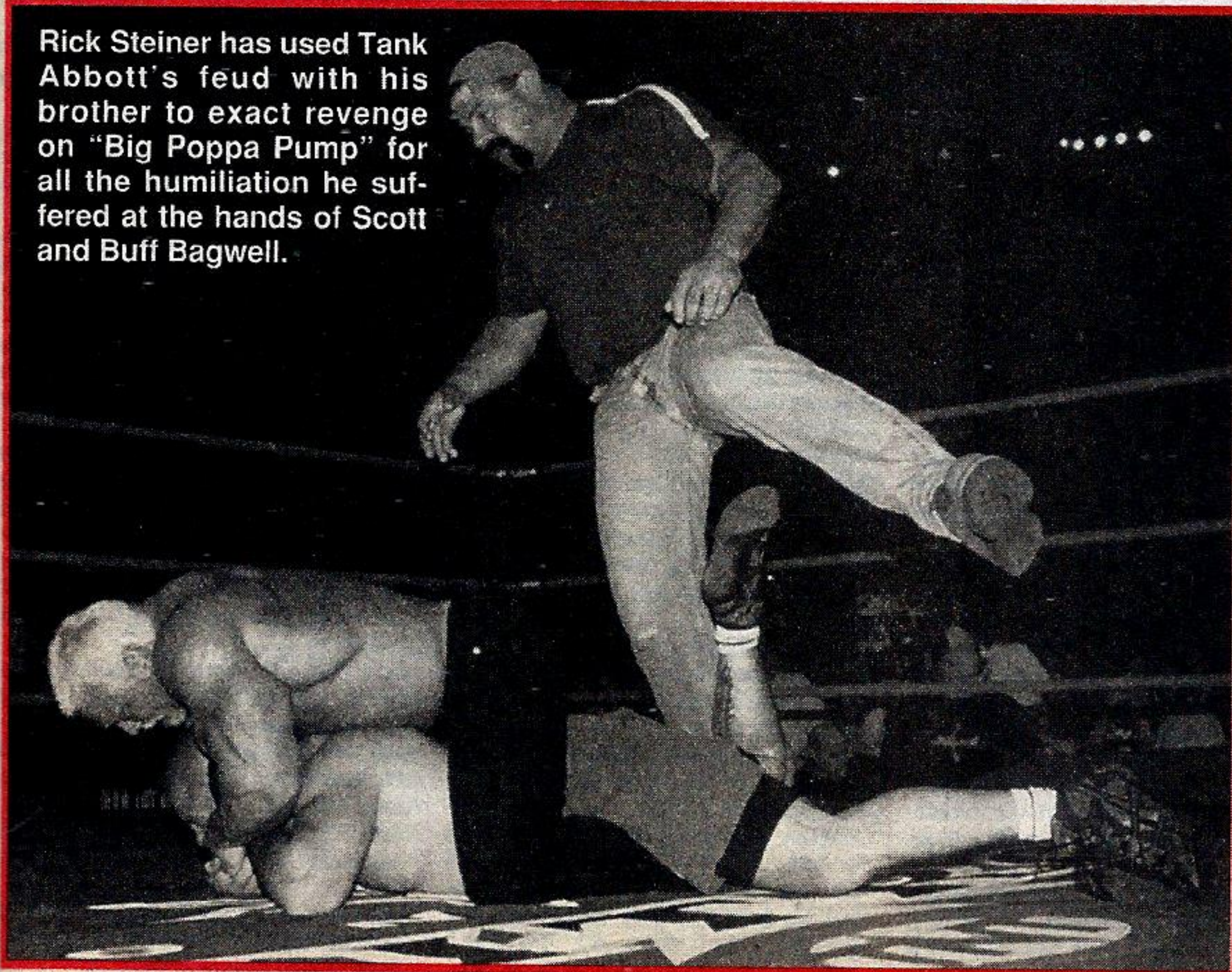
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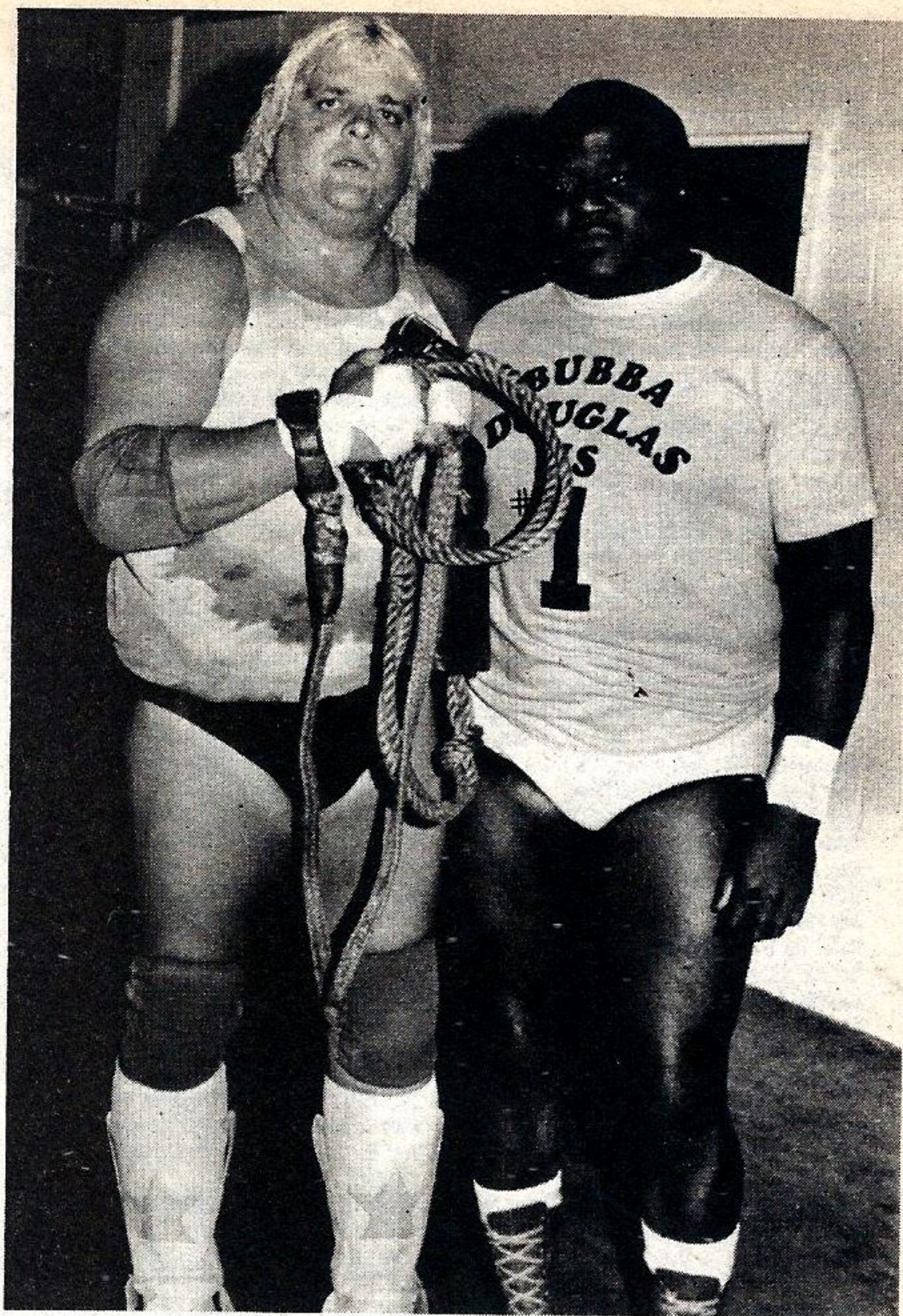
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Rick Steiner has used Tank Abbott's feud with his brother to exact revenge on "Big Poppa Pump" for all the humiliation he suffered at the hands of Scott and Buff Bagwell.

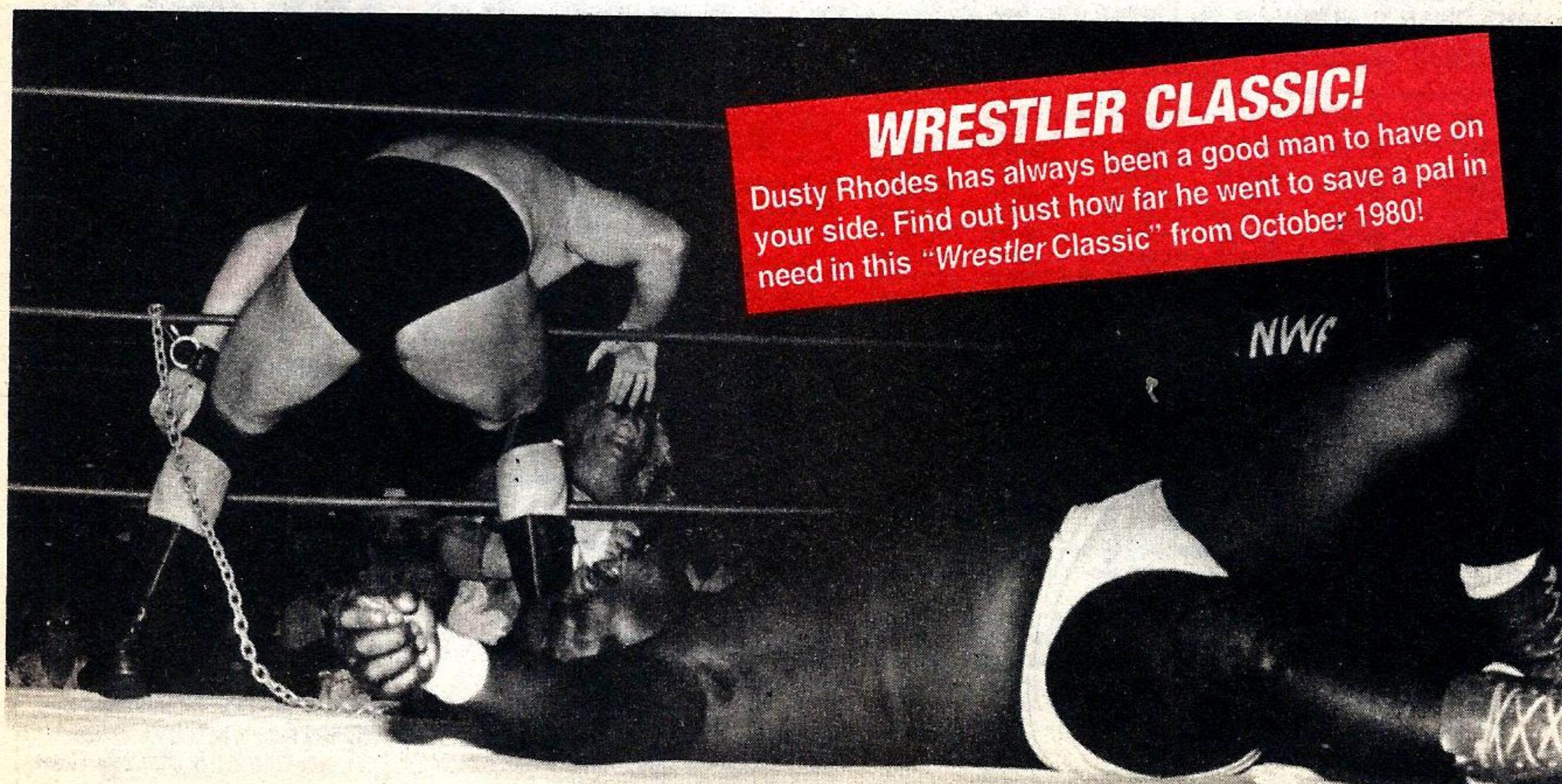


Friendship demands sacrifices.

As always, Dusty Rhodes goes beyond anything expected of mere mortals. When defending a friend, Rhodes disdains all conventional wisdom about self-preservation. Bubba Douglas is a friend. Bubba Douglas was in trouble. Rhodes never hesitated in coming to the rescue



DUSTY RHODES PROVES HE'D DIE FOR A



WRESTLER CLASSIC!

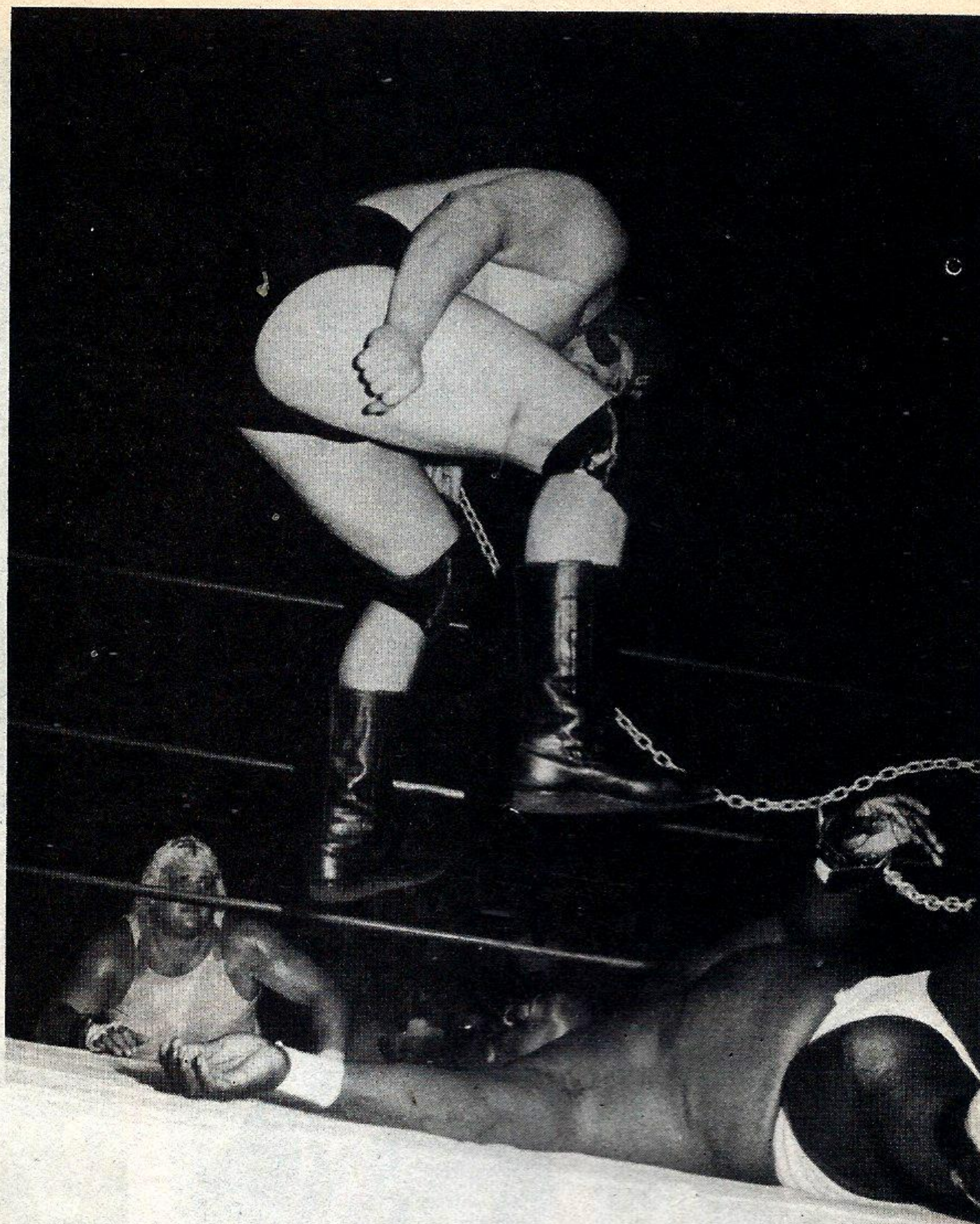
Dusty Rhodes has always been a good man to have on your side. Find out just how far he went to save a pal in need in this "Wrestler Classic" from October 1980!

THE ARENA WAS silent but for the sound of metal chains cracking into human flesh. The fans watched in stunned silence, hoping the horror would soon end.

Nikolai Volkoff hoped the torture would never end. As he brutally punished Bubba Douglas, every nerve in his body was alive with delight. Again and again, using the most horrible savage tactics, Volkoff battered Bubba mercilessly. Tragedy hung in the air like a suffocating fog.

Then, as if in answer to the crowd's prayers, Dusty Rhodes came running from the dressing room area. Rushing into the ring, he leaped at Volkoff and knocked the Russian to the ground. Douglas was spared further torment. Volkoff, seeing the look of vengeance in Dusty's eyes, worked himself free of the chain and rushed to the dressing room.

Douglas managed to get to his



Dusty Rhodes had seen enough. Bubba Douglas was to be battling Nikolai Volkoff in a Russian Chain Match, one-on-one. But Volkoff was receiving help from Sir Oliver Humperdink, and Douglas was in severe trouble. Despite the risks, Dusty had to do something to help his friend.

RIEND

feet. Dusty went to offer Bubba aid. The brave grappler shook his head and hobbled to the dressing room by himself. The crowd gave him an ovation that shook the rafters. Dusty followed his friend, ready to help if he should falter.

Back in the dressing room, Douglas collapsed on the training table. Rhodes quickly summoned a doctor, who examined the man thoroughly.

"He should be fine in a few days," the doctor said, "though I'd like him to take some tests tomorrow. Can you have him in my office. Bubba knows where it is."

"He so wanted to do well in his

hometown," Dusty said with a shake of his head. "He didn't want Lakeland to see him beaten."

"Volkoff didn't beat him," the doctor replied, "because Bubba never gave up. That's more important than any victory in the ring. Bubba showed us courage. We're all proud of him." Dusty and the doctor walked a few steps before the doctor asked, "And what about you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Tomorrow, you wrestle Volkoff. He'll be looking for revenge. He won't care how he gets it, as long as it's painful and bloody. You know that."

"I've been in tough matches before."

"This could be your toughest. You knew that when you ran in tonight. I admire a man who can run in front of a firing squad. That's what you did tonight. Volkoff will be looking to kill."

Dusty didn't say anything. He looked straight ahead. His gaze was cold and hard. The doctor left him. Rhodes stood alone for a few moments, then went back to Douglas. Warily, Bubba turned to Dusty and smiled.

"Thanks, pal," Bubba said, "I needed the help. Still, it wasn't a smart thing for you to do."

"Who does the smart thing?"

The next night, Dusty stood alone in his dressing room. He'd been furiously working on



Before departing for the dressing room with Douglas, Rhodes let Humperdink know his feelings on meddling managers.

strategies all day. Now, as the moment approached, Dusty knew the strategies were meaningless. Tonight would be survival of the fittest. And the meanest.

The time came for Dusty to enter the arena. He thought back on last night. Given a second chance, would he have done anything different? Dusty knew, given 1,000 chances, he'd always come to the help of a friend. Well, fella, he thought, get ready to pay the price of friendship.

Volkoff paced the ring like a man possessed. Fire seemed to shoot out from his nostrils. When he saw Rhodes, a bloodthirsty grin spread across his features, turning his face into an ugly mask of hatred.

The match began. It's impossible to detail the maneuvers in this kind of brawl. Within minutes, the ring mat was slick with both wrestlers' blood. Volkoff's teeth looked like pearly fangs when he smiled through his scarlet face. The two men battered each other senseless without a moment's rest.

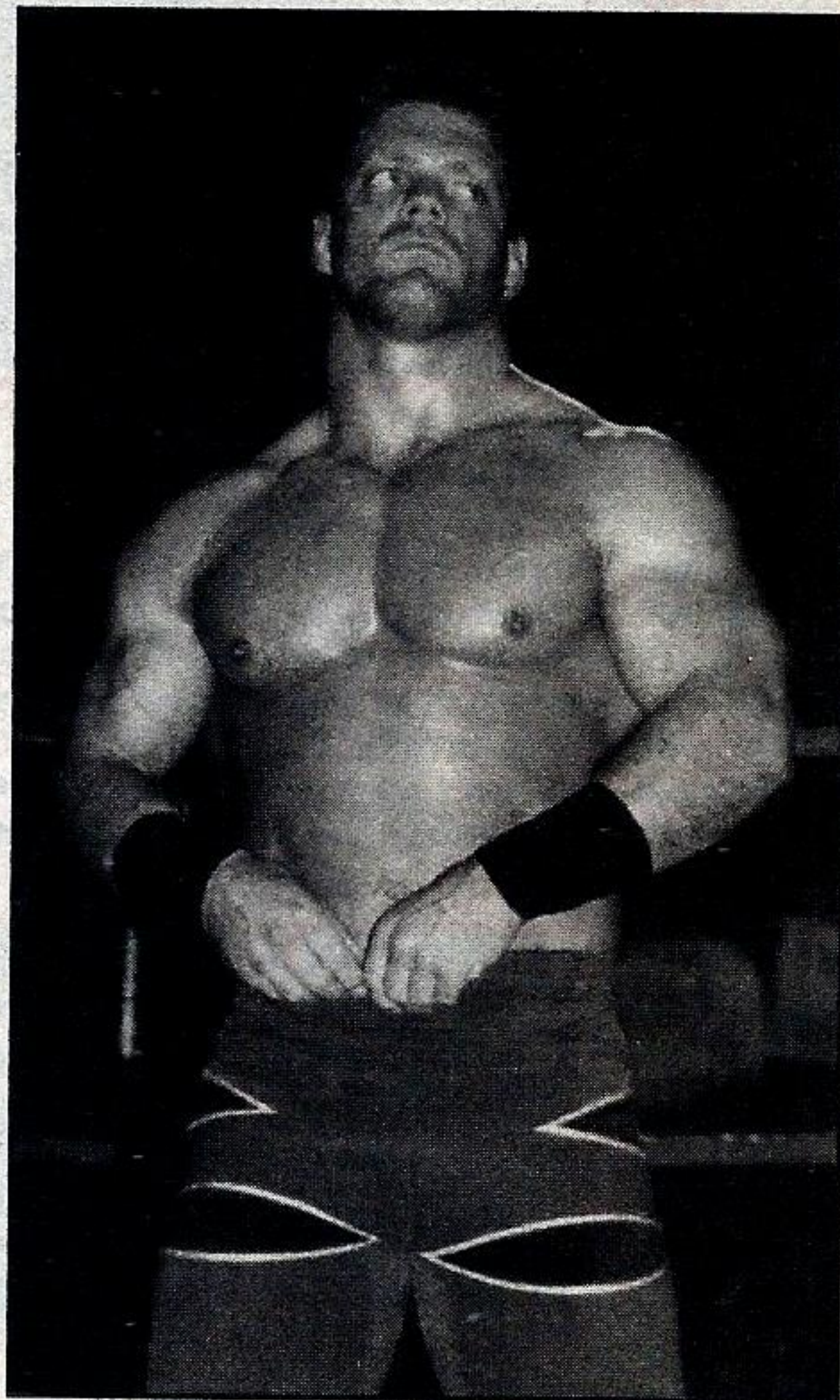
Eventually, these two battered humans slowed from exhaustion. Their movements were sloppy, painful to watch, and guided by a spirit only professional athletes can understand. Still, they continued to smash each other again and again, forcing themselves to make one more attack.

Finally, the buzzer sounded. The time limit brought an end to the bloody brawl. Rhodes walked slowly back to his dressing room. Fans were shocked to see him smile. He was thinking, "I'd still help Bubba again. I must be crazy. I hope I never get sane." □

Wrestler

TOP 10

- 1 JUSTIN CREDIBLE**
227, Waterbury, CT
(2) ECW World champion
- 2 JEFF JARRETT**
230, Nashville, TN
(5) WCW World champion
- 3 KENTA KOBASHI**
261, Tokyo, Japan
(4) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
- 4 TRIPLE-H**
284, Greenwich, CT
(8) WWF World champion
- 5 KENSUKE SASAKI**
233, Tokyo, Japan
(3) IWGP heavyweight champion
- 6 SCOTT STEINER**
275, Detroit, MI
(9) WCW U.S. champion
- 7 THE ROCK**
272, Miami, FL
(1) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 8 KEVIN NASH**
356, Detroit, MI
(-) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
- 9 CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
(-) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 10 RHINO**
285, Detroit, MI
(10) ECW TV champion



Chris Benoit

TAG TEAMS

- 1 YUJI NAGATA & MANABU NAKANISHI**
Combined weight: 455 pounds
(1) IWGP International tag team champions
- 2 CHRISTIAN & EDGE**
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 3 KRONIC**
Combined weight: 622 pounds
(9) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 4 TOO COOL**
Combined weight: 433 pounds
(-) WWF World tag team champions
- 5 CHRIS CHETTI & NOVA**
Combined weight: 454 pounds
(7) No. 1 contenders: ECW World tag title
- 6 BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(2) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 7 MIKE BARTON & JOHNNY ACE**
Combined weight: 513 pounds
(10) No. 1 contenders: All-Japan International tag title
- 8 DANNY DORING & ROADKILL**
Combined weight: 533 pounds
(-) No. 2 contenders: ECW World tag title
- 9 TEST & ALBERT**
Combined weight: 642 pounds
(8) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 10 ROAD DOGG & X-PAC**
Combined weight: 452 pounds
(-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

WCW

World Champion:

JEFF JARRETT

(C) 230, Nashville, TN

- 1—SCOTT STEINER**
(1) 275, Detroit, MI
- 2—KEVIN NASH**
(-) 356, Detroit, MI
- 3—RIC FLAIR**
(7) 243, Charlotte, NC
- 4—STING**
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—DALLAS PAGE**
(2) 260, Point Pleasant, NJ
- 6—VAMPIRO**
(-) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- 7—MIKE AWESOME**
(10) 285, Tampa, FL
- 8—TERRY FUNK**
(9) 247, Amarillo, TX
- 9—TANK ABBOTT**
(-) 240, Huntington Beach, CA
- 10—SHANE DOUGLAS**
(5) 255, Pittsburgh, PA

WWF

World Champion:

TRIPLE-H

(2) 284, Greenwich, CT

- 1—CHRIS BENOIT**
(3) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 2—THE ROCK**
(C) 272, Miami, FL
- 3—CHRIS JERICHO**
(1) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 4—EDDIE GUERRERO**
(4) 221, El Paso, TX
- 5—RIKISHI PHATU**
(7) 421, San Francisco, CA
- 6—DEAN MALENKO**
(6) 216, Tampa, FL
- 7—BOB HOLLY**
(-) 234, Mobile, AL
- 8—PERRY SATURN**
(-) 237, Boston, MA
- 9—CRASH HOLLY**
(9) 225, Mobile, AL
- 10—KURT ANGLE**
(8) 233, Pittsburgh, PA

ECW

World Champion:

JUSTIN CREDIBLE

(C) 227, Waterbury, CT

- 1—RHINO**
(1) 285, Detroit, MI
- 2—TOMMY DREAMER**
(2) 265, Yonkers, NY
- 3—YOSHIHIRO TAJIRI**
(4) 224, Tokyo, Japan
- 4—JERRY LYNN**
(-) 224, Minneapolis, MN
- 5—ROB VAN DAM**
(-) 237, Battle Creek, MI
- 6—THE SANDMAN**
(9) 244, Philadelphia, PA
- 7—MIKEY WHIPWRECK**
(-) 204, New York, NY
- 8—LITTLE GUIDO**
(5) 201, Howard Beach, NY
- 9—MASATO TANAKA**
(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—SCOTTY ANTON**
(-) 235, Atlanta, GA

NWA

NWA Champion:

NAOYA OGAWA

(C) 286, Tokyo, Japan

- 1—KEVIN NORTHCUTT**
(4) 348, Chalmette, LA
- 2—KURRGAN**
(2) 345, Hamilton, Ontario
- 3—GARY STEELE**
(5) 241, London, England
- 4—EQUALIZER**
(-) 275, Atlantic Highlands, NJ
- 5—ROBBY ROYCE**
(-) 205, Toronto, Ontario
- 6—TRACEY SMOTHERS**
(-) 227, Atlanta, GA
- 7—STONE MOUNTAIN**
(-) 350, Stone Mountain, GA
- 8—CURTIS SLAMDAWG**
(8) 222, Boston, MA
- 9—AIR PARIS**
(-) 190, Summerville, GA
- 10—COLT STEELE**
(6) 240, Charlotte, NC

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue. Note: In an effort to keep the ratings as up-to-date as possible, these pages are often the last to be sent to the printer. Thus, the ratings may reflect changes not reflected in the remainder of the issue.

For period ended June 1, 2000

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Rick Deeze; 1—Creeping Death; 2—The Scorpion; 3—Gemini; 4—Steve Niles; 5—Neal Leathers; 6—Sebastian Kane; 7—Major Havoc; 8—Jackie Anderson; 9—Don Carson; 10—Terry Mullagan.

CAPITOL CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Brad Taylor; 1—Max Riproc; 2—The Madd Chef; 3—Rude Dawg; 4—Dru Jordan; 5—Freezer Thompson; 6—The Specialist; 7—Twisted Syster; 8—Casino Kid; 9—Snapp Dogg; 10—Jeremy James.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—J.J. The Ring Crew Guy; 1—Glen Osbourne; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—B.W. Brown; 4—Ty Street; 5—Charlie Haas; 6—Scoot Andrews; 7—Mr. Ooh La La; 8—Russ Haas; 9—Vince Goodnite; 10—Mozart Fontaine.

FAR NORTH WRESTLING: Champion—Seth James; 1—T. Rantula; 2—Bigg Playa; 3—Cyrus Steele; 4—Dynamite Dean; 5—Dennis Gregory; 6—Shirley Doe; 7—Toby Cline; 8—Bison; 9—K.C. Hammer; 10—Ricky Martinez.

FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS WRESTLING: Champion—Kodo Fuyuki; 1—H; 2—Masato Tanaka; 3—Mr. Gannosuke; 4—Tetsuo Kuroda; 5—Jado; 6—Gedo; 7—Koji Nakagawa; 8—Kintaro Kanemura; 9—Hisakatsu Oya; 10—Kyoko Inoue.

MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Bruiser; 1—Tom Brandi; 2—Romeo Valentino; 3—Julio Fantastico; 4—Gillberg; 5—Gregory Martin; 6—Jimmy Cicero; 7—Corporal Punishment; 8—Dino Devine; 9—Ronnie Zukko; 10—Christian York.

NORTHEAST WRESTLING: Champion—Dave Vicious; 1—Ralph Mosca; 2—King Kong Bundy; 3—Julio Fantastico; 4—The Patriot; 5—Christian York; 6—Joey Matthews; 7—Chris Candido; 8—John Diamond; 9—Xavier; 10—Gillberg.

NWA WILDSIDE: Champion—Stone Mountain; 1—Terry Knight; 2—Eddie Golden; 3—A.J. Styles; 4—Rick Michaels; 5—Jessie Taylor; 6—Onyx; 7—David Young; 8—Big Ron Studd; 9—J.C. Dazz; 10—Scotty Wrenn.

OKLAHOMA PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING: Champion—Bull Schmitt; 1—Renegade; 2—Chief Red Eagle; 3—Bolo; 4—Big Daddy Moore; 5—Splash Jackson; 6—Rocco Valentino; 7—Jimmy Kane; 8—Schrapnel; 9—Luke LaPointe; 10—Jean Paul.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Cham Pain; 1—Kross; 2—Rick Link; 3—Uncle Tom Kettle; 4—Major DeBeers; 5—Scab; 6—Boris Dragoff; 7—Tears; 8—Chrome; 9—Stratus; 10—Aldo DeGama.

SOUTHERN STATES WRESTLING: Champion—War Machine; 1—Chuck Jones; 2—Tracey Smothers; 3—Beau James; 4—Manny Fernandez; 5—Ron Ray; 6—K.C. Thunder; 7—Flex Armstrong; 8—Buddy Landell; 9—Boris Dragoff; 10—Mike Cooper.

THUNDER WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Florida Hurricane; 1—Johnnie Lee; 2—Dagon Briggs; 3—Phantom; 4—Ghetto Superstar; 5—Ashe Corvan; 6—O'Callaghan; 7—Michael Figgs; 8—Tiger; 9—Python; 10—Alexander Figgs.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:

KENSUKE SASAKI

(C) 251, Tokyo, Japan

1—MASA CHONO

(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan

2—NAOYA OGAWA

(1) 286, Tokyo, Japan

3—MANABU NAKANISHI

(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan

4—KEIJI MUTO

(3) 245, Yamanashi, Japan

5—YUJI NAGATA

(4) 228, Tokyo, Japan

6—SCOTT NORTON

(-) 360, Minneapolis, MN

7—JUSHIN LIGER

(6) 222, Hiroshima, Japan

8—HIROYOSHI TENZAN

(5) 270, Tokyo, Japan

9—SATOSHI KOJIMA

(10) 223, Tokyo, Japan

10—SHINJIRO OTANI

(8) 215, Yokohama, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:

KENTA KOBASHI

(C) 282, Fukuchiyama, Japan

1—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(1) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

2—TOSHI AKI KAWADA

(5) 245, Ashikaga, Japan

3—JUN AKIYAMA

(2) 225, Hiroshima, Japan

4—TAKAO OMORI

(4) 221, Tokyo, Japan

5—STAN HANSEN

(-) 322, Borger, TX

6—AKIRA TAUE

(9) 265, Tokyo, Japan

7—YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA

(3) 270, Sapporo, Japan

8—STEVE WILLIAMS

(7) 265, Norman, OK

9—YOSHINARI OGAWA

(6) 202, Fichigi, Japan

10—MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN

(8) 235, Honolulu, HI

EMLL

EMLL Champion:

UNIVERSO DOS MIL

(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—PIERROTH JR.

(1) 251, Cuernavaca, Mexico

2—APOLO DANTES

(-) 215, Guadalajara, Mexico

3—DR. WAGNER JR.

(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

4—VILLANO III

(3) 220, Mexico City, Mexico

5—ATLANTIS

(2) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico

6—BLUE PANTHER

(5) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

7—NICO EL MILLONARIO

(-) 200, Tijuana, Mexico

8—NEGRO CASAS

(7) 175, Mexico City, Mexico

9—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.

(6) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico

10—EMILIO CHARLES JR.

(-) 222, Mexico City, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:

LATIN LOVER

(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—HECTOR GARZA

(3) 220, Monterrey, Mexico

2—CHARLY MANSON

(10) 221, Mexico City, Mexico

3—CIBERNETICO

(9) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

4—HEAVY METAL

(4) 180, Mexico City, Mexico

5—BLUE DEMON JR.

(6) 180, Toluca, Mexico

6—ABISMO NEGRO

(5) 210, Pachuca, Mexico

7—PERRO AGUAYO

(7) 220, Zacatecas, Mexico

8—EL CANEK

(-) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

9—OCTAGON

(-) 180, Monterrey, Mexico

10—PERRO AGUAYO JR.

(1) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico

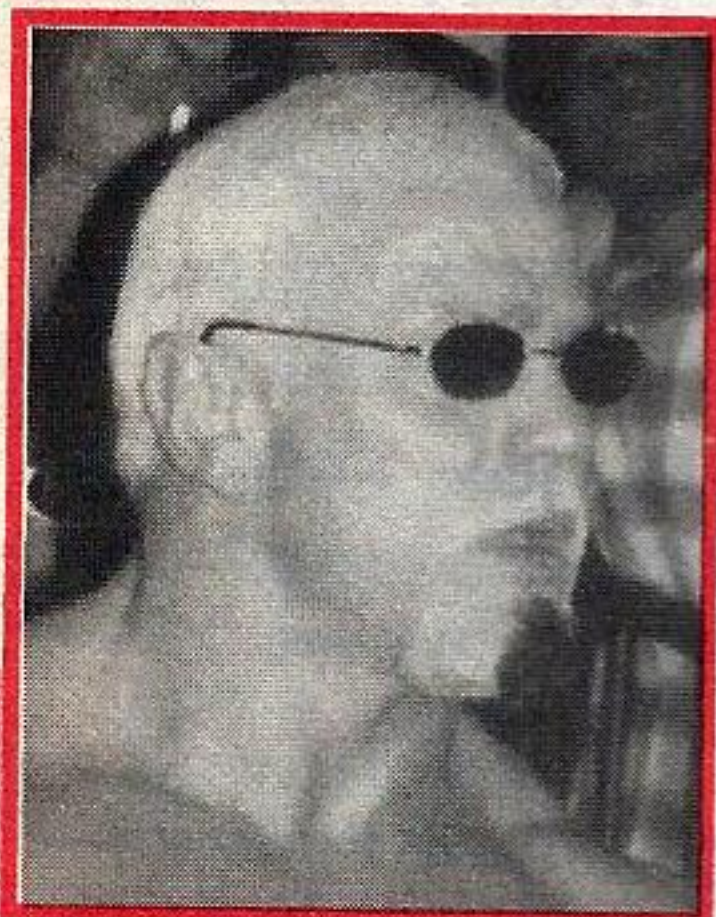
Ratings

ANALYSIS

What does it mean to be a champion?

There's no question that most major titles have been devalued over the last few years. With so many title changes taking place (especially in WCW), you shouldn't feel bad if you've had to think for a few seconds before you could remember who one of the world champions was at the time.

WCW has done quite a bit to devalue its titles even further lately. For instance, there was the **David Arquette** thing. As if it's not bad enough that a skinny actor became World champ for a few days, the way he won the belt was laughable. Even **Ric Flair's** World title win on May 15 wasn't a big deal. Flair only earned his title shot by winning a battle royal a few weeks earlier, plus word had leaked out beforehand that he was soon going to need shoulder surgery, so he didn't figure to be champion long.



Scott Steiner

When he had that equilibrium problem and nearly collapsed on *Thunder* in May, **Vince Russo** took the title from him and gave it to **Jeff Jarrett**, who lost it to **Kevin Nash**, who gave it back to Flair, who lost it back to Jarrett. This all happened within a few weeks!

Then there was the World tag team title, which **Kronic** won by beating **Buff Bagwell** and **Shane Douglas** in a match in which the wrestlers counted their own pins. A few weeks later, they lost by DQ to **Shawn Stasiak** and **Chuck Palumbo** in a match in which the title could change hands on a DQ (for no good reason).

Also devalued was the cruiserweight championship. **Chris Candido** had been a strong champion after beating **The Artist** on April 16, but then he signed for a tag team match pitting him and **Tammy** against **Crowbar** and **Daffney**. Another instance in which a singles belt was defended in a tag team match! Daffney got the pin on Tammy, so she ended up with the strap.

You might not think the WCW hardcore title ever meant much, but how fair was it for **Vince Russo** and **Eric Bischoff** to force **Terry Funk** to defend it against all **The Misfits in Action** simultaneously on May 15?

Thanks to **Booker**, Funk won, but would those Misfits have really had anything to be proud of if one of them won the belt?

What does all this mean to the ratings? It means it's hard for us to strongly consider WCW champs for the highest spots in our Top 10. For this issue, we *did* give Jarrett the number-two spot. When he wasn't WCW World champ during the month covered by these ratings, he was ardently pursuing the belt. U.S. champ **Scott Steiner** slides in at five because he regularly puts his belt on the line and should soon be gunning for the World championship.



Kane

The other singles champs in WCW didn't come close to making the Top 10, and Stasiak and Palumbo didn't even make our tag team rankings. When the important belts are being defended in such ridiculous matches and are changing hands so often, it becomes harder and harder to argue that they're very prestigious.

Even though WWF World champ **Triple-H** is ranked below Jarrett in the Top 10 this month, the title he holds is much more prestigious than Jarrett's. The competition for that strap is fierce, and Triple-H will do anything he can to retain the gold. Sometimes he doesn't always look good doing it; that's why he's only ranked number four. His arch-rival, **The Rock**, is three spots below him, and both **Kane** and **The Undertaker** could be back in the Top 10 again soon.

Intercontinental champ **Chris Benoit** comes in at number nine. He and **Chris Jericho** have done a lot to increase the value of that title. Their recent matches have been grueling for them and spectacular for us to watch. With **Hardcore Holly** and **Val Venis** also pursuing that belt now, it seems like a very important prize. Don't be surprised to see those two men make a strong case for an inclusion in the Top 10. □

That's all for this month. If you have any questions or thoughts about all the injuries in wrestling right now, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

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